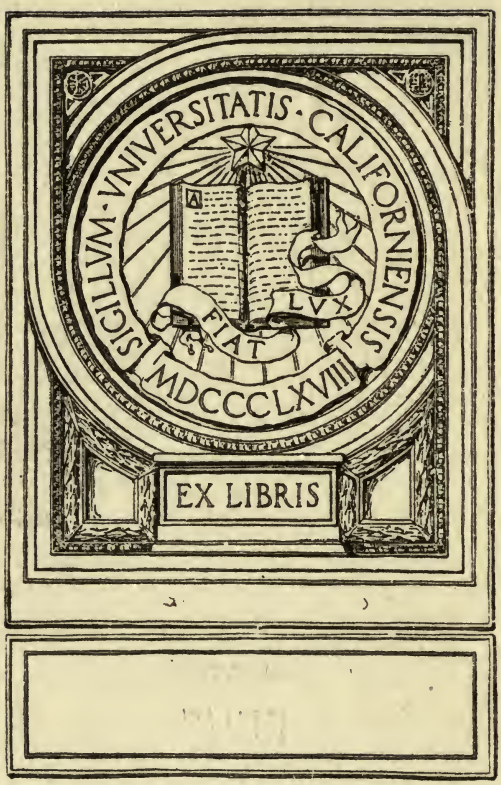
A Child's Guide to Reading

John Macy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A CHILD'S GUIDE TO READING

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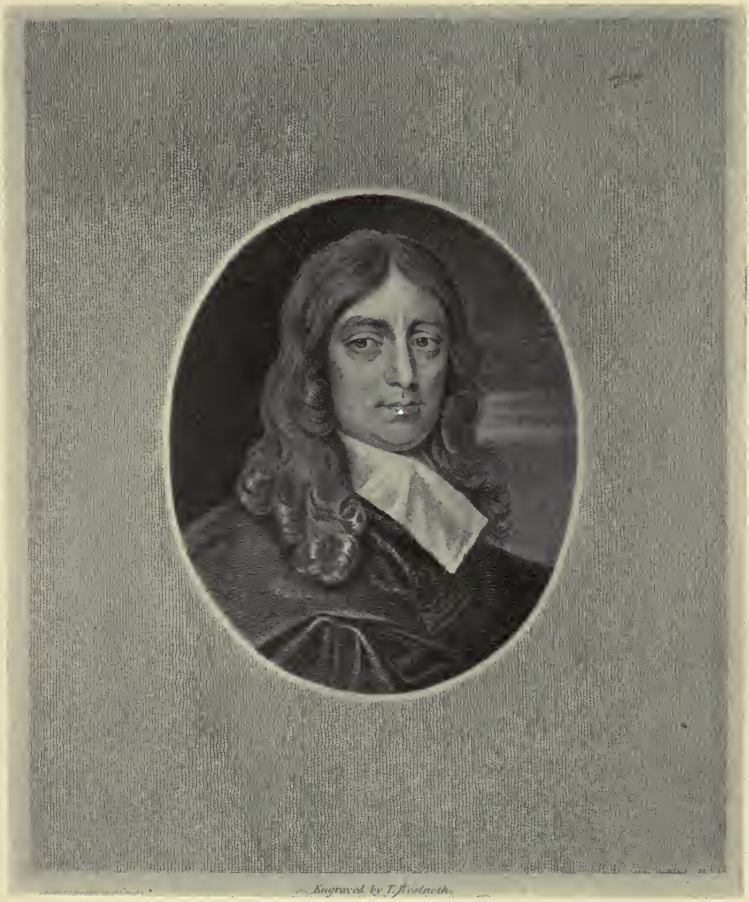

MILTON

A CHILD'S GUIDE TO READING

BY

JOHN MACY

The greatest pleasure in life is that of reading while we are young.—WILLIAM HAZLITT.

Though in all great and combined facts there is much which childhood cannot thoroughly imagine, there is also in very many a great deal which can only be truly apprehended for the first time at that age.—WALTER BAGEHOT.

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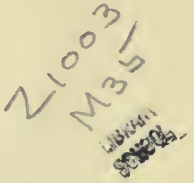

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PREFACE

This is a Child's Guide to Literature and not a Guide to Juvenile Books. The larger part of the books discussed in the various chapters and included in the supplementary lists were written for adult readers, and nearly all of them are at least as interesting to the reader of forty as to the reader of fourteen. The great writers are the goal and the child is the traveler. That is why in a Child's Guide appear the names of Browning, Carlyle, Tolstoi, Meredith, Gibbon, Darwin, Plato, Æschylus. A normal child will not be reading those masters, certainly not all of them, but he will be reading toward them; and between the greatest names will be found lesser writers who make easy upward slopes for young feet that are climbing to the highest. In the supplementary lists will be found very little of what is admittedly ephemeral, and still less of that kind of "Juvenile" which has not sufficient literary quality to outlast the most childish interests and tastes. On the other hand, if we have any feeling for the abundant human nature of children, we cannot invite them to fly, nor pretend that we have ourselves flown, to the severe heights of Frederic Harri-

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son's position when he advises that we read only authors of the first rank in every subject and every nation. That ideal, which, to be sure, in his excellent essay on the "Choice of Books" is tempered by his humanity and good sense, is at too chilly an altitude for a Child's Guide, or, I should think, for any other guide written with appreciation of what kind of advice ordinary humanity can or will benefit by.

In the advice offered by some very wise men to young and old readers there is much that is amusingly paradoxical. Schopenhauer, like Frederic Harrison, enjoins us to devote our reading time exclusively to the works of those great minds of all times and countries which overtop the rest of humanity. Yet Schopenhauer is giving that advice in a book which he certainly hopes will find readers and which, however great we may consider him, his modesty would not allow him to rank among the works of the greatest minds of all ages. Emerson counsels us to read no book that is not at least a year old. But he is himself writing a book of which he and his publishers undoubtedly hope to sell a few copies before a year has passed. Thoreau tells us that our little village is not doing very much for culture, and then he frightens us away from our poets by one of those "big" ideas with which he and the other preachers of his generation liked to make us children ashamed of ourselves. "The works of the great poets," he says, "have never yet been read by mankind, for only great poets can read them." Well, Thoreau, whatever else he was, was not a great

poet, and yet he seems to have read the great ones and to have understood them while he was still a young man. It is nearer the truth to say that anybody can read the great poets. That is the lesson, if there is one, which this Guide seeks to inculcate.

There should be a chapter in this book about the Bible and religious writings. But practical considerations debarred it. The American parent, though quite willing to intrust to others many matters relating to the welfare of his children, usually prefers to give his own counsels as to the spirit in which the Bible should be read and what other religious works should be read with it.

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A CHILD'S GUIDE TO READING

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CHAPTER I

OF GUIDES AND RULES FOR READING

IF you ever go into the Maine woods to hunt and fish you will have as your companion a veteran of forest and stream, a professional guide. It will be his duty to show you where the game and fish are most plentiful; to see that you do not get into trouble with the authorities by breaking the game laws; to make your camp comfortable; and if you are very green, to keep a watchful eye on you lest you accidentally shoot him or mistake another sportsman for a deer. If you are the right sort—the Maine guide is almost certain to be the right sort—you will get a great deal more from your companion than the simple services for which you pay him. He will be not only guide, but friend and philosopher, and will grudge you nothing of his stores of wisdom, kindliness, and humor.

If, however, you are to receive most profit and pleasure from life in the woods with this good comrade, you must do your part of the work, use what wits you have, and not show a disposition to lean

too limply on his strength. There are some things that the best guide cannot do. Not only will he be unable to think for you, but if you are too ready to let him do all the paddling, he will give you only perfunctory help and sulky advice. If, on the contrary, you are handy, he will be doubly handy. The more you learn, the more he can tell you. The more rapidly you approach the time when you are qualified to set up as professional guide yourself, the more you will enjoy the niceties of his theories of hunting, fishing, and wood lore.

Now, a guide to reading—if he be of the right sort—can do for the beginner in literature very much the same degree of service as the Maine woodsman. The literary guide is merely one who has lived longer among books than the unprofessional reader. Since he has elected to pass his life in the literary woods, he may be supposed to have a good nose for interesting clews, and sharp eyes and alert ears for leading signs. He knows what novels are good fishing and what poetic trees are sound and what are hollow. But his services, however willingly tendered and skillfully performed, have limitations. You must do your own thinking and your own reading, and understand that only when you cease to be in floundering need of a guide will you begin to receive the richest benefits of reading. The guide's idea of his duty is to help you to get along altogether without him.

No guide, no literary adviser can give you ears for poetry or eyes for truth. The wisest companion

can only persuade you to live among good books in order that your ear may have opportunity to reveal its fine capacities if it has them, and in order that your eye, dwelling upon beautiful things, may grow practiced in discernment. He cannot read for you. If you do not intend or hope to read any of the books mentioned in this volume, it will be waste of time for you to turn this page. If you passively receive every judgment of your guide about the merits of the scores of books we shall discuss, and never once question or try his judgment for yourself, you may be learning something about this guide, but you will not be learning about literature. It is not the part of a good pupil to surrender right of private judgment, but it is his part to give his judgment solid matter to work upon. On the other hand, too much independence, especially if it is not grounded in experience, is not modest. Even those who have read a good deal and arrived at mature opinions about books, may be content to accompany for a while a new guide whose experience has, necessarily, been different from that of others.

Whatever your hope or intention, your guide is only a guide; he has not power to lead you against your will, he has not the schoolmaster's right to prescribe a set course of reading. The reading must be voluntary, and to have value it must involve some hard work. Healthful entertainment and recreation we can safely promise. As for wisdom, reverence, the deeper delights of communion with noble minds, whether you meet these great spiritual experiences

depends on you. The guide can merely indicate where they may be sought.

Let us at the outset agree not to map out our journey too rigidly. A young friend of mine conceived at the age of sixteen the inordinate ambition to read everything that is good. He procured a public library catalogue, and asked a school-teacher to check off the titles of all the books knowledge of which is essential to a perfect education. The teacher smiled and confessed that she did not know even the titles herself. She might have added that neither does any one else know the titles, much less the insides, of all good books. But she marked some hundred names, and the ambitious youngster entered upon his long feast. He never finished all the books that were checked, for one or two proved discouragingly stiff and dull, and as he ran his eye down the list for the next prescribed masterpiece he saw other alluring titles which were not checked, and he wrote the numbers on library slips. The experience taught him that he must select books for himself, and that the world's library is too vast for anyone to be acquainted with all its treasures.

A youth so eager to know good books can be trusted sooner or later to find his way to them. For the benefit of less zealous persons, great faith used to be placed in lists of the Hundred Best Books. Such lists, even the very judicious selection made by Sir John Lubbock (Lord Avebury), can never be satisfactory. Lord Avebury is too good a student of nature and human nature to regard his list as final. It was

not final for one man, John Ruskin, who has given us a most inspiring essay on books, "Of Kings' Treasures." Ruskin thought that Lubbock had included in the chosen hundred some books that were not only unworthy but injurious. No man could make a list which would fare any better at the hands of another critic of solid convictions. Who shall select a social Four Hundred, all of whom we should accept as friends? Who can select a Four Hundred or a One Hundred of books and not leave out some of the noblest and best? It may be that Lubbock and Ruskin were both a little priggish to take that century of masterpieces quite so solemnly.

In books, as in all things, we cherish much that is not the best, but is good in its way. It is not natural nor right to reject all but the superlatively excellent. It is natural to prefer sometimes a book of secondary value, and it is perversely natural to turn away from the book that we are assured too insistently we "ought to read." A formal list of "oughts" is a severe test for ordinary human patience. Becky Sharp in "Vanity Fair" is a bad-tempered and bad-hearted young woman, but one can have a little sympathy with her when she throws her copy of Johnson's Dictionary at the head of her teacher as she parts forever from the school gates. It is not altogether her fault if Johnson's Dictionary seems to her at that moment of all printed things the most detestable.

Yet perhaps no better book than a good dictionary could be found whereon to base a library and a

knowledge of literature. The wit who said that the dictionary is a good book, but changes the subject too often, told but a partial truth, for the dictionary keeps consistently to the first of all subjects, the language in which all subjects are expressed. If it be true that Americans are of all peoples the most assiduous patrons of the dictionary, the future of our popular education and of our national literature is secure, for although mere words will not make thought, it is only thoughtful people who have a zealous interest in the dictionary. The schoolmaster who first made the present writer conscious that there is a difference between good English and bad used to tell us in the moments when regular school exercises were pending to study our dictionaries. The dictionary would be a reasonable answer to that delightful conundrum: "If you were wrecked on a desert island, and could have only one book, what book would you choose?"

The shrewdest of all answers to that question evaded it: "I should spend so much time trying to choose the book that I should miss the steamer and not be wrecked." These conundrums—the best book?—the best hundred books?—the greatest novel?—the greatest poem?—are not to be answered. The use of them is that they stir our imaginations and whet our judgments. If we come close and try to settle them in earnest, we bring tumbling about our heads a multitude of conflicting answers. Then we flee from the disorder and realize that conundrums are only stimulating nonsense. Individual choice among

the riches of the world's literature is not to be confined by hard and fast rules and tests.

As a practical matter we are not altogether free to choose. Our book friends, like our human friends, are in part chosen for us by accidental encounters. We do not wander over the world seeking for the dozen souls that are most fit to be grappled to us with hoops of steel. We merely choose the most congenial among our neighbors. So it is with books. Each of us wishes to select the best among such as are available, to have judgment in accepting the right one when it falls in our way. Biography is full of instances of chance encounters in the world's library that have shaped great careers.

John Stuart Mill records in his Autobiography how Wordsworth's poetry brought about in him a spiritual regeneration. At the age of twenty-one, precociously far advanced in his study of economics and philosophy, he found himself dejected and with no clear outlook upon life. He had often heard of the uplifting power of poetry, and read the whole of Byron, but Byron did him no good. He took up Wordsworth's poems "from curiosity, with no expectation of mental relief." "I found myself," he says, "at once better and happier as I came under their influence." The reading of Wordsworth was the immediate occasion, though not the sole cause, of a complete change in his way of thinking, and his new way of thinking led him to life-long associations with other great men.

We cannot tell which poet, which thinker, will do

for us what Wordsworth did for Mill. But while we are young we can take trial excursions into literature until we find our own. And when we do find our own, the treasure that is most precious to our souls, we shall know it, and know it the better, perhaps, if we have tried many good books and failed to like them.

If we are to rely so frankly upon our own likings, a word of caution may be necessary to help us distinguish liberty of choice from unreasonable license. We have to ask not only, Does this book interest me? —but, Does this book appeal to the best tastes and emotions in me? Many of us, by no means bad human beings, are so constituted that if our eye meets the morbid, the coarse, the senselessly horrible, we are fascinated, we are indeed interested. But it requires only the most simple self-analysis and a little honesty, to pull ourselves together and realize that it is an unworthy side of us, a side that we do not care to show our friends, which is being held at attention. Not that we need, like the stupidest of the old Puritans, be afraid of a book simply because it does thrill us and make us breathless. For every bad book which holds the depraved mind guiltily alert, a good book can be found, so absorbing, so compelling, that beside it the bad book is tame.

I once had a pupil whose transparent honesty was only one of his many lovable qualities. He believed that "Literature" consisted of dull books written by authors who died long ago. The ill-reasoned conclusion was his own, but I found that the raw mate-

rials of his error lay in the prudishness of one of his teachers. When I told him that "Huckleberry Finn," by a very live author, is literature, and that a short story by Mrs. Mary Wilkins-Freeman in a current magazine seemed to me literature of rare excellence, his delight so aroused his wits that for some time after that my part of the lessons consisted merely in meeting his enthusiasm halfway.

A friend once asked me what he could read to improve his mind. In the pride of a little superior wisdom, I loftily recommended Shakespeare. His reply was, "That is too deep for me." A wiser counselor than I, knowing his circumstances, would not have tried to cultivate a sprouting ambition with quite so perfect an intellectual instrument. But I stuck to my advice, and shortly after I had opportunity to prove that I was, if not wise, at least on the side of wisdom. We went together to see "Othello" —from gallery seats. After that my friend read the play and another that was bound with it.

Shakespeare is deep, forsooth. Hamlet's soliloquy in the fourth act:

> How all occasions do inform against me,

is so profound that it is darkened by its very depth. But the play "Hamlet" is a stirring melodrama that keeps the "gallery gods" leaning forward in their seats. The larger part of literature *is* by dead authors, because the "great majority" of the race is dead and includes its proportionate number of poets and prophets. Some great books *are* dull except to a

comparatively few minds in certain moods. But most dull books by old writers have been forgotten; our ancestors saved us the trouble of rejecting them. Most books that have survived are triumphantly alive in all senses. The vitality of a book that is just born may be brief as a candle flame. The old book that is still bright has proved that its brightness is the true luster of the metal; else we should not know its name.

CHAPTER II

THE PURPOSE OF READING

THE question why we read books is one of those vast questions that need no answer. As well ask, Why ought we to be good? or, Why do we believe in a God? The whole universe of wisdom answers. To attempt an answer in a chapter of a book would be like turning a spyglass for a moment toward the stars. We take the great simple things for granted, like the air we breathe. In a country that holds popular education to be the foundation of all its liberties and fortunes, we do not find many people who need to be argued into the belief that the reading of books is good for us; even people who do not read much acknowledge vaguely that they ought to read more.

There are, to be sure, men of rough worldly wisdom, even endowed with spiritual insight, who distrust "book learning" and fall back on the obvious truth that experience of life is the great teacher. Such persons are in a measure justified in their conviction by the number of unwise human beings who have read much but to no purpose.

> The bookful blockhead, ignorantly read,
> With loads of learned lumber in his head

is a living argument against mere reading. But we can meet such argument by pointing out that the blockhead who cannot learn from books cannot learn much from life, either. That sometimes useful citizen whom it is fashionable to call a Philistine, and who calls himself a " practical man," often has under him a beginner fresh from the schools, who is glib and confident in repeating bookish theories, but is not yet skillful in applying them. If the practical man is thoughtless, he sniffs at theory and points to his clumsy assistant as proof of the uselessness of what is to be got from books. If he is wise, the practical man realizes how much better off he would be, how much farther his hard work and experience might have carried him, if he had had the advantage of bookish training.

Moreover, the hard-headed skeptic, self-made and self-secure, who will not traffic with the literature that touches his life work, is seldom so confined to his own little shop that he will not, for recreation, take holiday tours into the literature of other men's lives and labors. The man who does not like to read any books is, I am confident, seldom found, and at the risk of slandering a patriot, I will express the doubt whether he is a good citizen.

Honest he may be, but certainly not wise. The human race for thousands of years has been writing its experiences, telling how it has met our everlasting problems, how it has struggled with darkness and rejoiced in light. What fools we should be to try to live our lives without the guidance and inspi-

ration of the generations that have gone before, without the joy, encouragement, and sympathy that the best imaginations of our generation are distilling into words. For literature is simply life selected and condensed into books. In a few hours we can follow all that is recorded of the life of Jesus—the best that He did in years of teaching and suffering all ours for a day of reading, and the more deeply ours for a lifetime of reading and meditation!

If the expression of life in words is strong and beautiful and true it outlives empires, like the oldest books of the Old Testament. If it is weak or trivial or untrue, it is forgotten like most of the "stories" in yesterday's newspaper, like most of the novels of last year. The expression of truth, the transmission of knowledge and emotions between man and man from generation to generation, this is the purpose of literature. Not to read books is like being shut up in a dungeon while life rushes by outside.

I happen to be writing in Christmas week, and I have read for the tenth time "A Christmas Carol," by Dickens, that amazing allegory in which the hard, bitter facts of life are involved in a beautiful myth, that wizard's caldron in which humor bubbles and from which rise phantom figures of religion and poetry. Can anyone doubt that if this story were read by every man, woman, and child in the world, Christmas would be a happier time and the feelings of the race elevated and strengthened? The story has power enough to defeat armies, to make revolutions in the faith of men, and turn the cold markets

of the world into festival scenes of charity. If you know any mean person, you may be sure that he has not read "A Christmas Carol," or that he read it long ago and has forgotten it. I know there are persons who pretend that the sentimentality of Dickens destroys their interest in him. I once took a course with an overrefined, imperfectly educated professor of literature, who advised me that in time I should outgrow my liking for Dickens. It was only his way of recommending to me a kind of fiction that I had not learned to like. In time I did learn to like it, but I did not outgrow Dickens. A person who can read "A Christmas Carol" aloud to the end and keep his voice steady is, I suspect, not a safe person to trust with one's purse or one's honor.

It is not necessary to argue about the value of literature or even to define it. One way of bringing ourselves to realize vividly what literature can do for us is to enter the libraries of great men and see what books have done for the acknowledged leaders of our race.

You will recall John Stuart Mill's experience in reading Wordsworth. Mill was a man of letters as well as a scientific economist and philosopher, and we expect to find that men of letters have been nourished on literature; reading must necessarily have been a large part of their professional preparation. The examples of men of action who have been molded and inspired by books will perhaps be more helpful to remember; for most of us are not to be writers or to engage in purely intellectual work; our ambi-

DICKENS

tions point to a thousand different careers in the world of action.

Lincoln was not primarily a man of letters, although he wrote noble prose on occasion, and the art of expression was important, perhaps indispensable, in his political success. He read deeply in the law and in books on public questions. For general literature he had little time, either during his early struggles or after his public life began, and his autobiographical memorandum contains the significant words: "Education defective." But these more significant words are found in a letter which he wrote to Hackett, the player: "Some of Shakespeare's plays I have never read, while others I have gone over perhaps as frequently as any unprofessional reader. Among the latter are 'Lear,' 'Richard III,' 'Henry VIII,' 'Hamlet," and, especially, 'Macbeth.'"

If he had not read these masterpieces, no doubt he would have become President just the same and guided the country through its terrible difficulties; but we may be fairly sure that the high philosophy by which he lifted the political differences of his day above partisan quarrels, the command of words which gives his letters and speeches literary permanence apart from their biographical interest, the poetic exaltation of the Gettysburg Address, these higher qualities of genius, beyond the endowment of any native wit, came to Lincoln in some part from the reading of books. It is important to note that he followed Franklin's advice to read much but not too many books; the list of books mentioned in the

biographical records of Lincoln is not long. But he went over those half dozen plays "frequently." We should remember, too, that he based his ideals upon the Bible and his style upon the King James Version. His writings abound in biblical phrases.

We are accustomed to regard Lincoln as a thinker. His right arm in the saddest duty of his life, General Grant, was a man of deeds; as Lincoln said of him, he was a "copious worker and fighter, but a very meager writer and telegrapher." In his "Memoirs," Grant makes a modest confession about his reading:

"There is a fine library connected with the Academy [West Point] from which cadets can get books to read in their quarters. I devoted more time to these than to books relating to the course of studies. Much of the time, I am sorry to say, was devoted to novels, but not those of a trashy sort. I read all of Bulwer's then published, Cooper's, Marryat's, Scott's, Washington Irving's works, Lever's, and many others that I do not now remember."

Grant was not a shining light in his school days, nor indeed in his life until the Civil War, and at first sight he is not a striking example of a great man influenced by books. Yet who can deny that the fruit of that early reading is to be found in his "Memoirs," in which a man of action unused to writing and called upon to narrate great events, discovers an easy adequate style? There is a dangerous kind of conjecture in which many biographers indulge when they try to relate logically the scattered

events of a man's life. A conjectured relation is set down as a proved or unquestioned relation. I shall say something about this in the chapter on biography, and I do not wish to violate my own teachings. But we may, without harm, hazard the suggestion, which is only a suggestion, that some of the chivalry of Scott's heroes wove itself into Grant's instincts and inspired this businesslike, modern general, in the days when politeness has lost some of its flourish, to be the great gentleman he was at Appomattox when he quietly wrote into the terms of the surrender that the Confederate officers should keep their side arms. Stevenson's account of the episode in his essay on "Gentlemen" is heightened, though not above the dignity of the facts, certainly not to a degree that is untrue to the facts as they are to be read in Grant's simple narrative. Since I have agreed not to say "ought to read," I will only express the hope that the quotation from Stevenson will lead you to the essay and to the volume that contains it.

"On the day of the capitulation, Lee wore his presentation sword; it was the first thing that Grant observed, and from that moment he had but one thought: how to avoid taking it. A man, who should perhaps have had the nature of an angel, but assuredly not the special virtues of a gentleman, might have received the sword, and no more words about it: he would have done well in a plain way. One who wished to be a gentleman, and knew not how, might have received and returned it: he would

have done infamously ill, he would have proved himself a cad; taking the stage for himself, leaving to his adversary confusion of countenance and the ungraceful posture of a man condemned to offer thanks. Grant, without a word said, added to the terms this article: 'All officers to retain their side arms'; and the problem was solved and Lee kept his sword, and Grant went down to posterity, not perhaps a fine gentleman, but a great one."

Napoleon, who of all men of mighty deeds after Julius Cæsar had the greatest intellect, was a tireless reader, and since he needed only four or five hours' sleep in twenty-four he found time to read in the midst of his prodigious activities. Nowadays those of us who are preparing to conquer the world are taught to strengthen ourselves for the task by getting plenty of sleep. Napoleon's devouring eyes read far into the night; when he was in the field his secretaries forwarded a stream of books to his headquarters; and if he was left without a new volume to begin, some underling had to bear his imperial displeasure. No wonder that his brain contained so many ideas that, as the sharp-tongued poet, Heine, said, one of his lesser thoughts would keep all the scholars and professors in Germany busy all their lives making commentaries on it.

In Franklin's "Autobiography" we have an unusually clear statement of the debt of a man of affairs to literature: "From a child I was fond of reading, and all the little money that came into my hands was ever laid out in books. Pleased with the 'Pil-

grim's Progress,' my first collection was of John Bunyan's works in separate little volumes. . . . My father's little library consisted chiefly of books in polemic divinity, most of which I read, and have since often regretted that, at a time when I had such a thirst for knowledge, more proper books had not fallen in my way, since it was now resolved that I should not be a clergyman. 'Plutarch's Lives' there was in which I read abundantly, and I still think that time spent to great advantage. There was also a book of De Foe's, called an 'Essay on Projects,' and another of Dr. Mather's, called 'Essays to do Good,' which perhaps gave me a turn of thinking that had an influence on some of the principal future events of my life."

It is not surprising to find that the most versatile of versatile Americans read De Foe's "Essay on Projects," which contains practical suggestions on a score of subjects, from banking and insurance to national academies. In Cotton Mather's "Essays to do Good" is the germ perhaps of the sensible morality of Franklin's "Poor Richard." The story of how Franklin gave his nights to the study of Addison and by imitating the *Spectator* papers taught himself to write, is the best of lessons in self-cultivation in English. The "Autobiography" is proof of how well he learned, not Addison's style, which was suited to Joseph Addison and not to Benjamin Franklin, but a clear, firm manner of writing. In Franklin's case we can see not only what he owed to books, but how one side of his fine, responsive mind was starved

because, as he put it, more proper books did not fall in his way. The blind side of Franklin's great intellect was his lack of religious imagination. This defect may be accounted for by the forbidding nature of the religious books in his father's library. Repelled by the dull discourses, the young man missed the religious exaltation and poetic mysticism which the New England divines concealed in their polemic argument. Franklin's liking for Bunyan and his confession that his father's discouragement kept him from being a poet, "most probably," he says, "a very bad one," show that he would have responded to the right kind of religious literature, and not have remained all his life such a complacent rationalist.

If it is clear that the purpose of reading is to put ourselves in communication with the best minds of our race, we need go no farther for a definition of "good reading." Whatever human beings have said well in words is literature, whether it be the Declaration of Independence or a love story. Reading consists in nothing more than in taking one of the volumes in which somebody has said something well, opening it on one's knee, and beginning.

We take it for granted, then, that we know why we read. We shall presently discuss some books which we shall like to read. But before we come to an examination of certain kinds of literature and certain of its great qualities, we may ask one further question: How shall we read? One answer is that we should read with as much of ourselves as a book

warrants, with the part of ourselves that a book demands. Mrs. Browning says:

> We get no good
> By being ungenerous, even to a book,
> And calculating profits—so much help
> By so much reading. It is rather when
> We gloriously forget ourselves, and plunge
> Soul-forward, headlong, into a book's profound,
> Impassioned for its beauty, and salt of truth—
> 'Tis then we get the right good from a book.

We sometimes know exactly what we wish to get from a book, especially if it is a volume of information on a definite subject. But the great book is full of treasures that one does not deliberately seek, and which indeed one may miss altogether on the first journey through. It is almost nonsensical to say: Read Macaulay for clearness, Carlyle for power, Thackeray for ease. Literary excellence is not separated and bottled up in any such drug-shop array. If Macaulay is a master of clearness it is because he is much else besides. Unless we read a man for all there is in him, we get very little, we meet, not a living human being, not a vital book, but something dead, dismembered, disorganized. We do not read Thackeray for ease; we read him for Thackeray and enjoy his ease by the way.

We must read a book for all there is in it or we shall get little or nothing. To be masters of books we must have learned to let books master us. This is true of books that we are required to read, such as text-books, and of those we read voluntarily and

at leisure. The law of reading is to give a book its due and a little more. The art of reading is to know how to apply this law. For there is an art of reading, for each of us to learn for himself, a private way of making the acquaintance of books.

Macaulay, whose mind was never hurried nor confused, learned to read very rapidly, to absorb a page at a glance. A distinguished professor, who has spent his life in the most minutely technical scholarship, surprised us one day by commending to his classes the fine art of "skipping." Many good books, including some most meritorious "three-decker" novels, have their profitless pages, and it is useful to know by a kind of practiced instinct where to pause and reread and where to run lightly and rapidly over the page. It is a useful accomplishment not only in the reading of fiction, but in the business of life, to the man of affairs who must get the gist of a mass of written matter, and to the student of any special subject.

Usually, of course, a book that is worth reading at all is worth reading carefully. Thoroughness of reading is the first thing to preach and to practice, and it is perhaps dangerous to suggest to a beginner that any book should be skimmed. The suggestion will serve its purpose if it indicates that there are ways to read, that practice in reading is like practice in anything else; the more one does, and the more intelligently one does it, the farther and more easily one can go. In the best reading—that is, the most thoughtful reading of the most thoughtful

books, attention is necessary. It is even necessary that we should read some works, some passages, so often and with such close application that we commit them to memory. It is said that the habit of learning pieces by heart is not so prevalent as it used to be. I hope that this is not so. What! have you no poems by heart, no great songs, no verses from the Bible, no speeches from Shakespeare? Then you have not begun to read, you have not learned how to read.

We have said enough, perhaps, of the theories of reading. The one lesson that seems most obvious is that we must come close to literature. Therefore we shall pause no longer on general considerations, but enter at once the library where the living books are ranged upon the shelves.

CHAPTER III

THE READING OF FICTION

OUR reason for considering prose fiction before the other departments of literature is not that fiction is of greatest importance, but that it is the branch of literature most widely known and enjoyed. Pretend as we may to prefer poetry and "solid books" (as if good fiction lacked solidity!) most of us have read more novels than histories, more short stories than poems. The good old Quaker who wrote a dull history of Nantucket could not understand why the young people preferred novels to his veracious chronicle; which was the same as saying that he did not understand young people, or old people, either. Since the beginning of recorded human history the world has gathered eagerly about the knees of its story tellers, and to the end of the race it will continue to applaud and honor the skillful inventor of fiction.

There was a time when preachers and teachers, at least those of the English-speaking nations, had a somber view of life and looked with distrust on pleasant arts; and no doubt they were right in holding that if stories take our thoughts off the great realities, we cannot afford to abandon our minds to

such toys and trivial inventions. But the severe moralists never made out a good case against the arts; they could not prove that joy and laughter and light entertainment interfered with high thinking and right living; and in time they rediscovered, what other wise men had never forgotten, that art is good for the soul. In the past century the novel has taken all knowledge for its province and has allied itself to the labors of prophets, preachers, and educators. The philosopher finds that some of the great speculative minds have uttered their thoughts in the form of artistic fiction. The true scholar no longer confines himself to annotating the fictions of the Greeks and Romans and the established classics of his race. He sees in the best art of his contemporaries the same effort of the human soul to express itself which informed the ancient masterpieces.

Jane Austen, whose delicate novels inspired stronger writers than she, who by her gentleness and truth influenced creative powers greater than her own, whimsically recognized and perhaps helped to remove the pedantic prejudice against fiction. The following passage from "Northanger Abbey" will give a taste of that delicious book. It is a quiet satire on the absurdly romantic such as is still manufactured and sold by the million copies to readers who, one may suppose, have not had the good fortune to read Jane Austen.

The heroines of "Northanger Abbey," Catherine and Isabella, "shut themselves up to read novels together. Yes, novels; for I will not adopt that un-

generous and impolitic custom, so common with novel writers, of degrading, by their contemptuous censure, the very performances to the number of which they are themselves adding; joining with their greatest enemies in bestowing the harshest epithets on such works, and scarcely ever permitting them to be read by their own heroine, who, if she accidentally take up a novel, is sure to turn over its insipid pages with disgust. Alas! if the heroine of one novel be not patronized by the heroine of another, from whom can she expect protection and regard? I cannot approve of it. Let us leave it to the reviewers to abuse such effusions of fancy at their leisure, and over every new novel to talk in threadbare strains of the trash with which the press now groans. Let us not desert one another; we are an injured body. Although our productions have afforded more extensive and unaffected pleasure than those of any other literary corporation in the world, no species of composition has been so much decried. From pride, ignorance, or fashion, our foes are almost as many as our readers; and while the abilities of the nine-hundredth abridger of the 'History of England,' or of the man who collects and publishes in a volume some dozen lines of Milton, Pope, and Prior, with a paper from the *Spectator*, and a chapter from Sterne, are eulogized by a thousand pens, there seems almost a general wish of decrying the capacity and undervaluing the labor of the novelist, and of slighting the performances which have only genius, wit, and taste to recommend them.

'I am no novel reader; I seldom look into novels; do not imagine that *I* often read novels; it is really very well for a novel.' Such is the common cant. 'And what are you reading, Miss ——?' 'Oh, it is only a novel!' replies the young lady; while she lays down her book with affected indifference, or momentary shame. 'It is only "Cecilia," or "Camilla," or "Belinda,"' or, in short, only some work in which the greatest powers of the mind are displayed, in which the most thorough knowledge of human nature, the happiest delineation of its varieties, the liveliest effusions of wit and humor, are conveyed to the world in the best chosen language."

Since that was written the novel has overridden its detractors by sheer bulk and power. The greatest man in Russia, Tolstoi, is, or was, a novelist. The greatest poet and thinker alive but yesterday in England, George Meredith, was a novelist. Of the two wisest living writers in America, one, Mr. William Dean Howells, is a novelist, and the other, Mark Twain, whom one hardly knows how to rank or label, has done a part of his best writing in the form of fiction. We no longer question the power and dignity of the novel. Our only concern is to discriminate good stories from bad and get the greatest delight and profit from the good.

To bring our discussion to a vital example, let us consider Thackeray's "Henry Esmond," an all but perfect fiction, in which every element of excellent narrative is present.

The first element is plot. A story must begin in

an interesting set of circumstances and arrive by a series of events to a conclusion that satisfies. The plot of "Esmond" is unusually well made, and it is composed of rich matter. From the first chapter in which Henry is introduced to us as "no servant, though a dependent, no relative, though he bore the name and inherited the blood of the house"—a youth with a mystery—on through the schemes for the restoration of the Stuart King, through Esmond's unsuccessful rivalry with the other suitors of Beatrice, to the end of the high intrigues of politics and the quiet conclusion of Esmond's career, the story moves steadily with well-mannered leisure. It takes its own time, but it takes the right time, slow when events are preparing, rapid and flashing when events come to a crisis. The great crisis, when Esmond overtakes the prince at Castlewood, breaks his sword and renounces both allegiance to the Stuarts and his own birthright, is one of the supreme dramatic scenes in literature. There Thackeray matches, even excels, Scott and Dumas. And such is the variety of his power that on other pages he writes brilliant and witty comedy surpassed only by the lighter plays of Shakespeare, on yet other pages he gives compact, lucid summary of events, the skill of which an historian might envy, and again he writes pages of comment on human character which equal the best pages of Esmond's friend, "the famous Mr. Joseph Addison."

The actors in these events are as distinct and memorable as any in history or as any in life. It

would be impossible for a reader not well acquainted with the age of Queen Anne to tell which of the personages in the book once moved in the flesh and which Thackeray created. And readers who have a wide acquaintance with the world and have known many of its sons and daughters will find in their gallery of memories no brilliant and heartless woman whom they seem to remember with more sense of intimacy and understanding than the woman who led Mr. Esmond such an uncomfortable dance and was the means of defeating Stuart ambitions—Beatrice Esmond. How are these personages of a fiction made to seem so lifelike? Genius only can answer, and genius is often unaware by just what devices a character is made to take on its own life and to walk, as it were, independent of the author. One thing is generally true of characters that strike us as real: they talk each in a style of his own, and yet they talk "like folks." The thing that they do may be far removed from anything in our experience, a soldier may be talking to a king, Esmond may be speaking in noble anger to the prince; we feel somehow that the words on the page have in them the sound of the human voice, that a man placed in such circumstances would think and speak as the novelist makes him speak.

In a good novel human beings, whose emotions represent and idealize our own, act and talk amid intelligible circumstances and entertaining events. These persons, since they seem real, are visible to the eye of fancy and the events happen in scenes—the

divisions of a drama are called "scenes"—which strike the imagination as if they were actually striking the senses. Each person is recognizable by look and gesture; each place is distinct from all other places, as the room you sit in and the street beyond your window are different from all other rooms and all other highways in the world. Our master of story telling is a master of description. An unskillful author tries to persuade us that a woman is beautiful by merely asserting it, and his assertion makes no impression on us because it appeals to the part of our brain that collects information and not the part that sees pictures. But Thackeray paints Miss Beatrice tripping down the stairs to greet Esmond, and no eye that has seen her through Thackeray's words but can recall the portrait at will. Further description of Beatrice accompanies the action all through the book and no one can tell, or cares to tell, where narration pauses and description begins.

No one can tell, either, where out of all this emerges that quality of writing called style. Manner of expression is not a separable shell in which the stuff is contained like a kernel. The manner is in the substance. Yet there is a charm of words felt for itself which seems to lie above and around the thing conveyed. In other books Thackeray loses his plot, and sometimes apparently forgets his characters, and yet he carries the reader on by virtue of saying things compellingly and invitingly. When, as in "Esmond," the order of action is so satisfying and the people are so interesting to watch and be with,

THACKERAY

and in addition every page is a delight to the ear, then literary excellence is complete.

Here, united in one book, are the elements of fiction—plot, character, description and style. And from these elements, however blended, there results a total value, the measure of a book's importance in relation to the other things in life. This value is essentially moral, not so much because literature is under peculiar obligations to preach and teach morality as because it is part of life and the fundamental things in life are moral in the large sense of the word. It is as impossible to think of a fiction which shall be neither moral nor immoral as to think of an act which shall be, in the modern meaningless word, unmoral. Even a very slight fiction, like a trivial act, weighs on one side or the other. All the best of our novelists have been fully conscious of their ethical obligations to their readers. Having thought deeply enough about life to write about it, they could not have failed to think deeply about their professional responsibility, their part in life.

I am going to quote at length a passage from Anthony Trollope's "Life of Thackeray" in the series of biographies known as *English Men of Letters*. The young reader can find no better book about the novel than this account of one great novelist by another. In spite of a current idea that shop-talk is not interesting, a thoughtful craftsman talking about his work is likely to be at his best. Moreover, Trollope's judgments on the moral obligation of the novelist are especially worthy of confidence, for he

is no heavy-handed preacher, no metaphysical critic, but a broad-minded humorist, an affectionate student of human nature, a cheerful workman who regarded his own books in a modest businesslike way.

"I have said previously," says Trollope, "that it is the business of a novel to instruct in morals and to amuse. I will go further, and will add, having been for many years a prolific writer of novels myself, that I regard him who can put himself into close communication with young people year after year without making some attempt to do them good, as a very sorry fellow indeed. However poor your matter may be, however near you may come to that 'foolishest of existing mortals,' as Carlyle presumes some unfortunate novelist to be, still, if there be those who read your works, they will undoubtedly be more or less influenced by what they find there. And it is because the novelist amuses that he must be influential. The sermon too often has no such effect, because it is applied with the declared intention of having it. The palpable and overt dose the child rejects; but that which is cunningly insinuated by the aid of jam or honey is accepted unconsciously, and goes on upon its curative mission. So it is with the novel. It is taken because of its jam and honey. But, unlike the honest and simple jam and honey of the household cupboard, it is never unmixed with physic. There will be the dose within it, either curative or poisonous. The girl will be taught modesty or immodesty, truth or falsehood; the lad will be taught honor or dishonor, simplicity or affecta-

tion. Without the lesson the amusement will not be there. There are novels which certainly can teach nothing; but then neither can they amuse any one.

"I should be said to insist absurdly on the power of my own fraternity if I were to declare that the bulk of the young people in the upper and middle classes receive their moral teaching chiefly from the novels they read. Mothers would no doubt think of their own sweet teaching; fathers of the examples which they set; and schoolmasters of the excellence of their instructions. Happy is the country that has such mothers, fathers, and schoolmasters! But the novelist creeps in closer than the schoolmaster, closer than the father, closer almost than the mother. He is the chosen guide, the tutor whom the young pupil chooses for herself. She retires with him, suspecting no lesson, safe against rebuke, throwing herself head and heart into the narration as she can hardly do into her task work; and there she is taught —how she shall learn to love; how she shall receive the lover when he comes; how far she should advance to meet the joy; why she should be reticent, and not throw herself at once into this new delight. It is the same with the young man, though he would be more prone even than she to reject the suspicion of such tutorship. But he, too, will learn either to speak the truth, or to lie; and will receive from his novel lessons either of real manliness, or of that affected apishness and tailor-begotten demeanor which too many professors of the craft give out as their dearest precepts.

"At any rate the close intercourse is admitted. Where is the house now from which novels are tabooed? Is it not common to allow them almost indiscriminately, so that young and old each chooses his own novel? Shall he, then, to whom this close fellowship is allowed—this inner confidence—shall he not be careful what words he uses, and what thoughts he expresses, when he sits in council with his young friend? . . . A novelist has two modes of teaching—by good example or bad. It is not to be supposed that because the person treated of be evil, therefore the precept will be evil. If so, some personages with whom we have been acquainted from our youth upward would have been omitted in our early lessons. It may be a question whether the teaching is not more efficacious which comes from an evil example. What story was ever more powerful in showing the beauty of feminine reticence, and the horrors of feminine evildoing, than the fate of Effie Deans [in "The Heart of Midlothian" by Scott]. The 'Templar' [in Scott's "Ivanhoe"] would have betrayed a woman to his lust, but has not encouraged others by the freedom of his life. 'Varney' [in Scott's "Kenilworth"] was utterly bad—but though a gay courtier, he has enticed no others to go the way he went. So has it been with Thackeray. His examples have generally been of that kind—but they have all been efficacious in their teaching on the side of modesty and manliness, truth, and simplicity."

To return to the elements of the novel, plot, char-

acter, description, style, if we think of a score of great novels that have had many readers for many years, we shall see that some novelists are blessed with genius for one element more than for another, or that they have chosen to put their energies into one or the other. And we shall see, too, that few novels are perfect, few as nearly perfect as "Esmond," and that we should not expect them to be. All that we need demand is that a writer give us enough of something to make the reading of his book worth while.

No rules that have so far been laid down about the requirements of fiction are final or from the reader's point of view of great assistance. Some of us have made up our minds that the English novel is growing more shapely and well constructed: Mr. W. D. Howells, for instance, by precept and practice, and some other novelists and critics who are under the influence of French fiction, insist on construction and form and simplicity of plot. Then in spite of all "tendencies" and rules of fiction, along comes Mr. William De Morgan with three novels which might have been written fifty years ago, and wins instantaneous and deserved success as a new novelist —at the age of seventy. His plots are as wayward and leisurely as most of Thackeray's, his people are human, and his discursive individual style is as fresh as if novelists had not been filling the world with books for two centuries. "Joseph Vance" and "Alice for Short" prove how inconsiderate genius is of rules made by critics and how far is the "old-fash-

ioned" novel from having gone stale and fallen on evil days.

So long as a plot has vitality of some kind, truth to life, or ingenuity, or dramatic power, it makes no difference to the mere reader what material the novelist chooses. Twenty years ago there was a strange contest between realists and romanticists. The realists, or as they sometimes call themselves, "naturalists," take the simpler facts of common life and weave them into stories. The romanticist selects from highly colored epochs of history, or from no-man's land, or from the more unusual circumstances of actual life, such startling adventures, such well-joined incidents, such mysteries, surprises, and dramatic revelations as we do not meet with in ordinary times and places. Thackeray is a romanticist in "Henry Esmond," a realist in "Pendennis" and "The Newcomes." Scott's novels are romantic. Those of Trollope, of Mr. Henry James, of Mr. W. D. Howells are realistic. There is no sharp line between the two. Dickens found extraordinary romance in ordinary London streets, which he knew with journalistic realism to the last brick and cobblestone. In "Bleak House," he says, he "purposely dwelt upon the romantic side of familiar things." But, though he may have considered this book a special quest for the romantic in real life, it does not differ in the kind or the proportion of its romanticism from a dozen others of his novels. It is no more romantic than "David Copperfield" or "The Old Curiosity Shop," no less romantic than the historical

fiction, "A Tale of Two Cities." His imagination penetrated life, real or unreal, familiar or remote, and found it rich with plot and subplot; he touched the slums with his mythmaker's wand, and in obedience to his touch the children of the streets and dark tenements became heroes of strange adventure, moving through mysteries as varied and wonderful as fairyland.

Because Dickens loved human beings and understood their everyday sorrow and happiness, he wrought into the great fabric of his plots a multitude of people as real, as like to us and our friends, as can be found in the work of the most thorough-going realist; he reflects, too, like the avowed realist, the social and political problems of his own times. He is both romanticist and realist. So also are his contemporaries, the Brontë sisters and Charles Reade. And their greatest successors in the English novel, Thomas Hardy and George Meredith, are equally masters of common social facts, human nature in its daily aspects, and of the highly colored, the picturesque, the mystery, the surprise, the dramatic complexity of events.

The genius of English fiction in most of its powerful exponents has this dual character of romance and realism. "Robinson Crusoe" is a romantic adventure; its scene is transported far away from human life to a solitude such as only the wanderer's eye has looked upon; the reader is taken bodily into another world. Yet Defoe is the first great realist in English prose fiction; he piles detail upon detail, gives an exact

inventory of Crusoe's possessions, and compels belief in the story as in a chronicle of events that really happened.

Later in the eighteenth century appeared Richardson's "Clarissa Harlowe," a vast romantic tragedy, which held the attention of all novel readers of the time; the story was published in parts, and when it was learned before the last part was printed that the ending was to be tragic, ladies wrote to Richardson begging him to bring his heroine out of her difficulties and allow her to "live happily ever after." The plot of this novel is imposed by the logic of character upon the facts of English society; the plot is not realistic or even probable in its relations to the known circumstances of the civilization in which it is laid; any magistrate could have rescued Clarissa. But everything stands aside to let the great romance pass by; the readers of the time, who knew better than we do the social facts surrounding an English girl, did not question the probability of the plot, because they accepted the character. The plot granted, Richardson's method is realistic. We know Clarissa's daily acts and circumstances; we have a bulletin of her feelings every hour. No modern psychological novelist ever analyzed the workings of a human mind more minutely, with greater fidelity and insight. The result is a voluminous diary of eighteenth-century manners and customs and sentiments hung upon as romantic a plot as was ever devised.

Midway in time between Richardson and Dickens

stands the king of romantics, Scott, and he, too, is a realist in his depiction of Scottish life and character. In "The Bride of Lammermoor" so melodramatic and "stagey" that it seems to be set behind footlights and played to music—a familiar opera is based upon it—there is one character that Scott found not in legend or history, but in the life he knew, Caleb Balderstone. Like the gravedigger in "Hamlet," he is a link between unusual, we might fairly say unnatural, events and common humanity. In many of Scott's novels, beside the strutting heroes that startle the world in high astounding terms, walk the soldiers, servants, parsons, shepherds, who by their presence make us feel that it is the firm earth upon which the action moves.

Argument among critics as to the nature of romance and realism helps, as all questions of definition may help, to make us understand the relation of one novel to another and to see the range and purpose of fiction. But that any one should say of two novels that one is better than the other, simply because it is more realistic or more romantic, is to impose a technicality on enjoyment with which enjoyment refuses to be burdened. Who that picks up a novel for the pleasure of reading it cares whether it is romance or realism? So long as it has vitality of its own kind, and gives us enough of the many virtues which a novel may possess, we are content to plunge into it and ask no questions. A lily is not a rose; it takes no great wisdom to know that; the botanists will tell us the exact difference, and the gardener

will tell us how they grow; but if botanist or horticulturist tells us which is more beautiful, we listen to his opinion and keep our own. Mr. Kipling's "Kim," or Mr. Howells's "A Modern Instance"; "Far from the Madding Crowd," by Thomas Hardy, or Scott's "Ivanhoe"; Stevenson's "Kidnapped," or Mark Twain's "Huckleberry Finn"—which of these books is realistic and which is the other kind? Suppose you read them to find out. In the midst of any one of them you will have forgotten the question, because the novelist will have filled your whole mind with other—and more important—interests.

A good novel is a self-contained, complete world with its own laws and inhabitants. The inhabitants and laws of different novels resemble each other in some degree or we should not be able to understand them. Great books, and great men, have common qualities, and yet it is true, in large measure, that they are memorable for their *difference* from other books and men. This suggests why histories of literature and analytical studies of the forms of literature are so often artificial and lifeless. The critic is fond of grouping books and authors together, of finding points of resemblance, of marking genius with brands and labels. In some histories of Elizabethan drama, Shakespeare is neatly placed in the center of a rising and declining "school of playwrights." He is laid out like the best specimen of a collection in a glass case. Shakespeare was a playwright; no doubt he was a "practical" one. But the important thing about him is that he was the greatest of poets, and

SCOTT

he is not at ease in any school or class of literary workmen. He is inexplicably, gigantically different from all other Elizabethan dramatists, and if he is to be grouped at all, his fellows are the few greatest poets of the world, not his contemporaries in the art, or the business, of playmaking, the best of whom do not reach to his shoulder. All the supreme creative geniuses are difficult to classify. They work in conventional art forms, the drama, the epic, in which scores of lesser poets have worked; but the greatest art emerges above the form. When rules of art and sharp characterizations of schools of art fit snugly on the shoulders of a writer, that alone is sufficient to prove that he is not a writer of the highest power.

However wisely critics and philosophers may argue about fiction and other forms of art, inexperienced readers will be narrowing their outlook if they make up their minds, after one or two experiments or as a result of a critical opinion which they get at second hand, that there are certain classes of stories that they do not like. If one knows that Stevenson is a romanticist and happens to have read "David Balfour" and failed to like it, it is foolish to rule out the romantic, for perhaps Dumas will prove better. Some people are tired beyond recovery of historical novels, because so many bad ones have been urged upon the public during the last fifteen years. Some people have decided that they do not like stories that end unhappily. This seems a thoughtless decision because many of the great fictions from the "Iliad" to "The Mill on the Floss" terminate with the death

of the principal characters and sadness for the characters that survive. When we hear some one say, "There is tragedy enough in real life, I want something pleasant to read," we may suggest that the great tragedy that is told in the Gospels has brought more lasting joy and good feeling to the race than any other story. Not to make so high an argument, I feel that I could give to any person who pretends to like only "pleasant" fiction a half dozen tragic novels that would capture and delight this sad soul that has seen enough of "tragedy in real life."

Arguments are unnecessary, for fiction itself outstrips them or defeats them and triumphs. The public is tired, we say, of historical romance, and it cannot be charmed by sad stories which end in death and disaster. Yet during the past winter one of "best sellers" was Miss Mary Johnston's "Lewis Rand." This is an historical romance laid in Jefferson's Virginia. It is a tragic romance; the finest gentleman is killed, the titular hero goes to prison on the last page, a ruin of ambitious genius, and the heroine, his wife, parts from us at the end to enter, in the world that lies just beyond the covers of books, a life of inevitable sadness.

Individual vitality is what makes the good book. When the good book appears we like to classify it and examine its form and material, but its vitality defies us. You may group all your friends and acquaintances in familiar types, and in thinking of them when they are absent you may assure yourself that they fall into definite intelligible classes. But

in the presence of any one of them, the most transparent and simple, you recognize the mystery of a person, a power, however slight, that is unlike other powers, a vital soul that baffles analysis. And so it is with books: each makes its effect as a living individual and it may have an entirely different effect from the book that seems nearest like it.

Somebody once expressed the idea that he did not care for Dickens because so many of his characters are low persons who would not be interesting to associate with in real life; and other readers have expressed the same idea, either sincerely or in thoughtless repetition. If they do not like Dickens, it is probably for some other reason than that Dickens portrays "common" people, for that reason is not broad enough to stand on. These same readers may like another writer whose characters are as low and uncultivated as most of the people whom Dickens loved. If such a writer is not to be found in our libraries, his first book may be still unpublished; he may walk to-morrow into the town where we live, discover the humor and pathos of our commonplace neighbors, and of the low persons whom we do not acknowledge as neighbors. And ever after our village will be a shrine for tourists. The great fiction writer is a magician; he upsets conventional values in a flash and turns lead into gold in spite of all the chemists. The true reader of fiction will be a believer in that miracle, and he will keep his mind receptive to it in every form in which it manifests itself.

CHAPTER IV

THE READING OF FICTION—(*Continued*)

IN discussing the question of plots we could not keep out the question of character, which we agreed for the purposes of our discussion is the second element of fiction. In importance it is the first—the indispensable element. What is fiction for except to tell us about human beings? I cannot believe what somebody said, that the three essentials of stories are first plot, second plot and third plot. In the first place, that sounds too clever to be true and in the second place—it is not true. The plot is the means of keeping persons in action so that we can get to know them. In this "naturalists" and "realists" find a good argument, for they put their emphasis on human character. They say: "Here we exhibit you and your friends and your enemies. Plot? We are telling a story. Stories are all about you. But we have not forced events out of probable order or distorted the facts of life beyond recognition for the sake of an exciting situation. We draw our fellow men, so that you recognize them as they are. Even as they are in their homes and shops and churches, so they are in these pages, talking, loving, hating, bargaining, intriguing, dying. We select the

significant, we heighten the values of life; but we portray life essentially as it is." True enough. The realist gives us "folks." But he has no monopoly of human beings. We are quite as well acquainted with Alice who wandered in Wonderland and went through the Looking Glass as we are with Mr. David Copperfield and Miss Maggie Tulliver. Peter Pan (in Mr. J. M. Barrie's play), who flew in the face of nature and refused to grow up, is so true a person that all the children recognized him at once and old men chuckled and remembered him.

The English novel is varied and abundant, and its characters, collectively, form a populous democracy. Everybody is in it somewhere from peasant to king, and if some of us and our friends have been left out, new novelists are at hand watching every kind and grade of life and preparing to fix it in a living page. The American novel is not yet old and broad enough to have captured all our types of men and women and recreated them in fiction. But a good beginning has been made. The varied voices of the American country town are heard from all corners of the land, but so far most of them have been voices of short compass, incapable of sustained utterance. We still depend for studies of American character on sketches and short stories, and these in the mass are an important body of literature. New England, Virginia, California, the Middle West, the great cities, have had their short-story writers. The novelists are still on the way. Our national life is so scattered and changing that the novelist has

difficulty in keeping a group of Americans together long enough to plot them into a large book. In Europe where a small town contains every kind of society the novelist finds the compact social stage all set and characters in abundance. Anthony Trollope, with little care to plot, sets society to turning in the quiet eddy of a small cathedral town and presently we are looking into the heart of England. He introduces the same people into novel after novel and we are always glad to see them again. The success of his many novels supports the contention that characters are the staff of fiction. A defect of plot is easier to pardon than a defect in character drawing.

Untruth to human nature, violence either to its waking experiences or its dreams, destroys a book, destroys the living world it represents and leaves us holding a thing of ink and paper. The other day I was reading a novel which has multiplied itself over the land by force of printing presses and sensational advertising. It is a story about modern people of an undistinguished but potentially interesting kind; the heroine is, if I remember right, a confidential secretary to a business man. The author makes her say something like this to her lover:

"Ere I knew you, there had come into my life but few pleasures and diversions; I had been like a bird shut up in a cage; and you set me free. Yet it was not that alone which attracted me to you. Grateful as I was, I was charmed, too, by your conversation which was so totally different than *(sic)* anything

I had known heretofore. You saved me from the wretched monotony of commonplace existence and took me into a new world, and my gratitude for that blossomed into love"; and so on.

The only thing in that which sounds like human speech is the blunder in the use of "than," which I suspect is an unintentional blunder on the part of the author. The speech is no more appropriate to the given character in the given place than a sentence out of Macaulay's essays. The most ingenious plotting could not entice a discriminating reader beyond that dead line of empty words, for they are proof enough that the author himself does not know his heroine's character. To be sure, dialogue in novels cannot be "natural as life," for actual conversation taken down word for word is diffuse and hard to read. The conversations in books must sound natural, appropriate to the place, the time, and the character of the person whom the reader is expected to believe in. There cannot be any rules for making conversation; if there are any rules they are for the novelists to study, not for the reader. The reader only knows whether the speeches sound right or whether the author is cheating him by passing off as talk mere words which the author strung out on paper and did not hear with his inner sense from the lips of his character.

In the same book there is a description which I will quote, if I can resist the temptation to parody it:

"The house nestled amid the verdurous shade of

immense trees; to the left of the wooded park were sloping lawns dotted here and there with beds of the most exquisite flowers, which in contrast to the old weatherbeaten house greatly enhanced the beauty of the scene. Inside the house the utmost good taste prevailed from the antique colonial hatrack in the front hall to the handsome, but simple furniture of the parlor, in one corner of which on a sofa that was a cherished heirloom, a young girl might have been seen sitting engaged in embroidering a fine piece of linen. She was beautiful with large dark eyes and a luxuriant mass of richest brown hair," and so on.

Except for the poor fun of making sport of the author no one with a sense of humor will read beyond that. The author himself cannot see the place he would present to his reader's eye. Description, which we have chosen to regard as the third element of fiction, must aid the imagination to realize the events and the people or it is worse than ineffectual. The novelist whose story is "dotted here and there" with descriptions which really "enhance the beauty" of his story is to be numbered among the immortals.

The masters of description touch in details of sound and vision as they progress with the narrative, and the reader hears and sees without being aware that he has read description. The more leisurely novelists, who are great enough to carry a story through three volumes, do often stop and paint a picture, and even the great ones frequently fail to get the pictorial effect they seek. Scott's descriptions sometimes in-

terfere with his story and descend into a catalogue of details. But the total effect of his description is to make the entire world familiar with Scotland, streets, houses, mountains, and moors. It is part of Scott's patriotic purpose to preserve in a series of novels the legend, the history, the character, the ideals, the social customs of old and new Scotland; and he allows himself, as a kind of antiquarian, all the space he needs for minute description. So his descriptions serve a purpose, even when they lack imaginative vision. Moreover, the great river of his stories is broad and swift enough to carry an amount of dead wood which would choke narratives of lesser volume and power.

A great example of a long descriptive passage in fiction is in the fifty-fifth chapter of "David Copperfield." There is to be action enough presently to sweep the reader off his feet; in preparation for it Dickens gives three or four pages of description of the storm. The excellence of that description grows upon the reader who finds how seldom even the better novelists succeed in painting on large canvases. Few artists in prose have been adequate to the greatness of the sea. Stevenson has succeeded in giving both the seas on the Scotch coast and the Pacific with its mysterious islands. Of living writers in English the masters of "sea pieces" are Mr. Rudyard Kipling and Mr. Joseph Conrad. But none of the younger writers, even of those especially devoted to the sea, has excelled Dickens, landsman and London cockney as he was, in that great picture of the storm.

I once knew some young ladies who were enamored of the books of that third-rate novelist, Miss Marie Corelli. To be fair, I never read but two of her novels, and though they are so false that I doubt her ability to write anything beautiful and true, she may have written masterpieces that I have unfortunately missed. The young ladies had named their club after one of Miss Corelli's books. I asked one worshipper what she liked in her favorite novelist. The reply was startling: "I love the beautiful descriptions." It was interesting to find a young lady who liked beautiful descriptions for their own sake—most of us are not so far advanced in our critical enjoyment of fiction—and it was interesting to learn that Miss Corelli had written beautiful descriptions. But when I ungraciously pressed the matter, my friend confessed that she could not find any descriptive passage that seemed especially worth exhibiting.

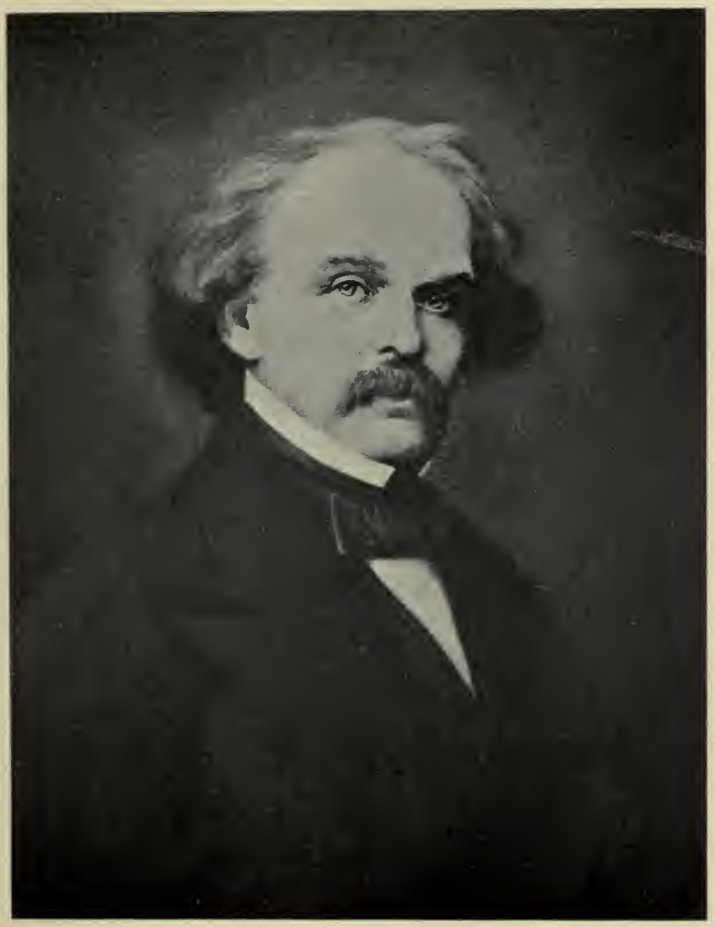
The secret of this case, if we are ungallant enough to subject to inquisition so tender a thing as a young lady's conscience and literary tastes, is that she had learned from some muddied source that a beautiful description is a precious thing in a novel. She was afraid that the things in the book which really interested her might not be admirable—though I dare say they are harmless enough—and so she presented that little white excuse for reading the novel. Just so ladies who are not young have been known to admire a fiction of doubtful character wholly for its "exquisite style," when if they really appreciated

"exquisite style," they would be reading something else.

There is an enjoyment of style that seems either apart from the other kinds of enjoyment in reading or is a refinement, an addition, which makes the other kinds keener. In choosing novels, however, we do not need, as a practical matter, to hunt for style, any more than we need to hunt for descriptions, for the writer who is great enough to contrive plots and draw characters must have learned how to write well. The good novels are all in good style. The fiction maker whose style is poor is almost certain to fail in other ways and be altogether unacceptable. It is true that among the great ones some have more distinction of manner than others. Thackeray never writes so clumsily as Dickens at his worst. Stevenson's phrasing is invariably excellent, whereas a greater novelist, Walter Scott, often for pages at a time throws off his sentences so hastily that they are not easy, not pleasant, to read. Jane Austen in her style is near to perfection; George Eliot, a writer of much more power, whose heights of eloquence are not equaled by any other woman, seems sometimes to be either expressing a kind of thought, or expressing it in a vocabulary and with a complexity of construction, which would be tolerable in a philosophic essay but is not suited to fictitious narrative. It is well to begin to be aware of the degrees of style and their general effect, to enjoy beauty and eloquence and grace in some measure for their own sake. But the inexperienced

reader is safe to choose his novels for their substance; the style will usually be adequate and the merits of the style will enter the reader's consciousness gradually and without effort of appreciation on his part.

In choosing novels the ordinary reader need not at first concern himself with the history of a novelist or his technical characteristics, or with the place which critics have given to him in their schemes of literary development. A simple method of selection is to find on somebody's advice a novel that has interested many readers, and then if it prove good, to try another by the same author. If a writer has produced two novels that interest you, it is safe to assume that he has written a third and a fourth. Some writers, it is true, have been distinguished for a single masterpiece. "Don Quixote" is the only book of Cervantes' that we are likely to care for. "Robinson Crusoe" is all that most people have found good in Defoe's tales (though there is much merit in his other stories). No other book of Mrs. Stowe's is even second to "Uncle Tom's Cabin." "The Vicar of Wakefield" is the glorious whole of Goldsmith's narrative prose, though he succeeded in every other form of literature, including the prose drama. But the man who can write two novels can write three if he has time; the two-novel power is likely to be a ten-novel power with torpedo fleets of short stories and essays. Anyone who has liked "Silas Marner" and "Middlemarch" will not need to be urged to read "Felix Holt," "Adam Bede," "Romola," "The Mill



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on the Floss." The person who has once read and enjoyed two novels of Dickens is likely to read six or eight. "Pendennis" leads to "The Newcomes." And any of Trollope's "Barchester," novels is an introduction to the happily interminable series.

I have purposely said little about the short story, because in this day of magazines we all read short stories, some of them pretty good ones. There are fifty persons who can write one or two acceptable short tales to one who can make a novel of moderate merit. And the great writers of the tale have often been novelists as well, so that if one begins to read novels one will meet with the best short stories which have been worth collecting into volumes. Readers of "The House of Seven Gables" and "The Scarlet Letter" will make the acquaintance of Hawthorne's "Twice Told Tales" and "Mosses from an Old Manse." Among modern fictionists of importance Poe stands almost alone as a writer of tales who never tried the longer and greater form of the novel, though there are several excellent authors, such as Mr. Rudyard Kipling, Miss Sarah Orne Jewett, Mrs. Mary Wilkins-Freeman, whose short tales outweigh in value, if not in quantity, their more extended narratives.

In our discussion of fiction we have dwelt entirely on books for adults and neglected what is known as juvenile fiction. Here again the omission was intended. Juvenile fiction is certain to make its way in more than ample supply into American homes, and I doubt whether fiction that is wholly good for

adults is not the best for boys and girls of, say, thirteen. When our fathers and mothers, or our grandfathers and grandmothers, were young, they read the newest book by Dickens, Thackeray, Wilkie Collins, and were no worse for having fewer "juveniles" than modern publishers purvey for the benefit of the growing generation. I should think that Henty's books, which have merits, but were turned out on a steam lathe, would suggest that Scott's historical romances are better, and that the Pattys and Pollys and Lucys and Brendas, whose adventures are chronicled in many an entertaining series would speedily make way for heroines like Maggie Tulliver and heroes like Master Tom Brown, whose youth is perennial. When "juveniles" are really good, parents read them after children have gone to bed. I do not know whether "Tom Brown at Rugby" is catalogued by the careful librarians as a book for boys, but I am sure it is a book for men. I dare say that a good many pairs of eyes that have passed over the pages of Mr. John T. Trowbridge and Elijah Kellogg and Louisa Alcott have been old enough to wear spectacles. And if Mrs. Kate Douglas Wiggin ever thought that in "Timothy's Quest" and "Rebecca" she was writing books especially for the young, adult readers have long since claimed her for their own. I have enjoyed Mr. A. S. Pier's tales of the boys at "St. Timothy's," though he planned them for younger readers. We are told on good authority that *St. Nicholas* and *The Youth's Companion* appear in households where there are no children, and they

give a considerable portion of their space to serial stories written for young people. Between good "juveniles" and good books for grown persons there is not much essential difference.

Anyone who is old enough to make out the words can safely enter the large world of the English and American novel. The chances of encountering the few that are unfit for the young are slight. Ruskin in his essay "Of Queens' Gardens," which treats of the education of girls, says: "Whether novels, or poetry, or history be read, they should be chosen, not for what is *out* of them but for what is *in* them. The chance and scattered evil that may here and there haunt, or hide itself in, a powerful book, never does any harm to a noble girl; but the emptiness of an author oppresses her, and his amiable folly degrades her." A novel in our language that has been read and freely talked of for many years is as safe as a church; and there are enough such novels to keep one happily occupied during all the hours one can give to reading fiction to the end of one's days.

LIST OF FICTION

Supplementary to Chapter IV

The following list of novels, tales, and prose dramas is offered to the young reader by way of suggestion and not as a "prescribed" list. Like the other lists in this book it omits many masterpieces that will occur immediately to the mind of the older

reader, and it includes some books that are not masterpieces. The notes, or "evaluations" as the librarians call them, are arbitrary, indicating the private opinions of the present Guide; they are sometimes extensive in the case of less important writers and are omitted in the cases of the great masters. The way to use the list is to run over it from time to time until you form a bowing acquaintance with the names of a few authors and some of their books. One title or another is likely to attract you or excite your curiosity. If you follow the impulse of that aroused curiosity and go get the book, the list will have served its purpose.

Edmond François Valentin About (1828–85). *Le Roi des Montagnes.*

Easy to read in French, and to be found translated into English.

Æsop. *Fables.*

Found in many editions, some especially selected and illustrated for children.

Louisa May Alcott (1832–88). *An Old-Fashioned Girl. Little Women. Little Men. Work. Jack and Jill. Jo's Boys.*

Miss Alcott has always been a favorite of young people. Her faithful and wholesome stories of life in a New England country town entitle her to place in the delightful company of Rose Terry Cooke, Sarah Orne Jewett, Mrs. Mary Wilkins-Freeman, and Miss Alice Brown.

Thomas Bailey Aldrich (1836–1907). *The Story of a Bad Boy. Marjorie Daw.*

A delicate romancer with subtle humor and a turn for paradoxical ingenious fooling which is characteristic in one form or another of American writers as unlike as Frank R. Stockton, Edward Everett Hale, and Mark Twain.

James Lane Allen. *Flute and Violin. The Blue Grass Region. A Kentucky Cardinal. Aftermath.*

Hans Christian Andersen (1805–75). *Fairy Tales.*

To be found in *Everyman's Library.* This collection of books, published at fifty cents the volume by E. P. Dutton & Co., is perhaps the best ever grouped in an inexpensive edition. It will be frequently referred to in this and succeeding lists. Most of the books in it are worth reading and no doubt worth buying, and this is true of most "Universal Libraries," "Libraries of the World's Best Literature," "Five-Foot Book Shelves," etc. But for variety's sake one would wish not to have all the books on one's shelves in the same style of type and binding. And in general it is better to buy the book one wants, distinguished by its title and author, than to take as a whole any editor's or publisher's collection of "classics."

Rasmus Björn Anderson. *Norse Mythology.*

The simplest form in which to read the stories of the Eddas and Scandinavian myths. It is at once

a lore book for students and a wonder book for young and old.

Arabian Nights. In a volume of *Everyman's Library.* Another good edition is that prepared by Andrew Lang.

Jane Austen (1775–1817). *Sense and Sensibility. Pride and Prejudice. Mansfield Park. Emma. Northanger Abbey. Persuasion.*

In *Everyman's Library.*

Honoré de Balzac (1799–1850). *Atheist's Mass. The Chouans. Christ in Flanders. Eugénie Grandet. Old Goriot. The Quest of the Absolute. Wild Ass's Skin.*

These are the works of Balzac found in translation in *Everyman's Library.* All the novels of Balzac have been translated into English. Balzac is not the easiest of French novelists to read in the original, though not very difficult. The young American who will take the trouble, and give himself the pleasure, of reading a score of French novels will find himself with a good reading knowledge of the language, and school and college examinations in French will lose their terror.

James Matthew Barrie. *Auld Licht Idylls. A Window in Thrums. The Little Minister. Sentimental Tommy. Tommy and Grizel.*

Mr. Barrie has the most tender and whimsical imagination of living writers in English. His later work has been largely for the stage.

Richard Doddridge Blackmore (1825–1900). *Lorna Doone.*

George Henry Borrow (1803–81). *Lavengro. Romany Rye.*

In *Everyman's Library.*

Charlotte Brontë (1816–55). *Jane Eyre.*

Emily Brontë (1818–48). *Wuthering Heights.*

Alice Brown. *King's End. Meadow Grass. Tiverton Tales.*

John Brown (1810–82). *Rab and His Friends.*

In *Everyman's Library.*

Thomas Bulfinch. *The Age of Chivalry, or Legends of King Arthur. The Age of Fable, or Beauties of Mythology. Legends of Charlemagne, or Romance of the Middle Ages.*

The prose storehouse of Arthurian legend in English is Thomas Mallory's "Morte d'Arthur," which is in two volumes in *Everyman's Library.* But Mallory is not easy reading. The finest versions are those by the poets, Tennyson's "Idylls of the King," Matthew Arnold's "Tristram and Iseult," Swinburne's "Tale of Balen." Modern prose versions suited to young readers are Howard Pyle's "Story of King Arthur and his Knights," Sidney Lanier's "Boy's King Arthur" and Andrew Lang's "Book of Romance." Legends allied to the Arthurian stories are found in Lady Guest's "Mabinogian," which appears in one volume in *Everyman's Library.*

See also "The Boy's Mabinogian," by Sidney Lanier.

The stories of Charlemagne are found in a volume suited for young readers edited by Alfred John Church.

Classic mythology in its highest form is, of course, to be found in the Greek and Roman poets, and it permeates English poetry. Prose versions of Greek and Roman tales suited to young readers are to be found in Nathaniel Hawthorne's "Wonder Book" and "Tanglewood Tales," Charles Kingsley's "The Heroes, or Greek Fairy Tales for My Children," and "Stories from the Greek Tragedians," by Alfred John Church. See also "A Child's Guide to Mythology," by Helen A. Clarke.

Henry Cuylur Bunner (1855–96). *Short Sixes.*

Among the best American short stories.

John Bunyan (1628–88). *The Pilgrim's Progress.*

In *Everyman's Library* and many other cheap editions.

Frances Hodgson Burnett. *Little Lord Fauntleroy. Editha's Burglar. Sara Crewe.*

Frances Burney (Madame d'Arblay, 1752–1840). *Evelina.*

George Washington Cable. *Old Creole Days. The Grandissimes.*

Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra (1547–1616). *Don Quixote.*

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COOPER

In Motteux's translation in two volumes of *Everyman's Library,* and other popular editions.

Samuel Langhorne Clemens ("Mark Twain"). *Tom Sawyer. The Prince and the Pauper. Huckleberry Finn. A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court. Pudd'nhead Wilson. Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc. The Man that Corrupted Hadleyburg.*

William Wilkie Collins (1824–89). *The Woman in White. The Moonstone.*

Joseph Conrad. *Youth. Falk. The Children of the Sea. Typhoon.*

One of the most remarkable of recent writers, a Pole who adopted the English language and has contributed to its beauties. Unsurpassed as a writer of stories of the sea.

James Fenimore Cooper (1789–1851). *The Spy. The Pilot. The Last of the Mohicans. The Prairie. The Pathfinder. The Deerslayer. The Red Rover.*

The young reader had better plunge into Cooper before he ceases to be a young reader; not that the adult reader cannot enjoy these virile narratives, which have been read all over the world for nearly a century, they will always remain important records of early American life; but better fiction soon displaces them, growth in literary taste makes evident the defects which Mark Twain sets forth in his witty essay on Cooper; and to have grown beyond Cooper

without having met and enjoyed him means a genuine loss.

Dinah Maria Craik (Mrs. Mulock, 1826–87). *John Halifax, Gentleman.*

Francis Marion Crawford (1854–1909). *Mr. Isaacs. Dr. Claudius. Saracinesca. Sant' Ilario. A Cigarette Maker's Romance.*

Crawford had a vein of real genius which is obscured by the great number of his less meritorious books.

George William Curtis (1824–92). *Prue and I.*

This pleasant, fine-hearted humorist should not be neglected by the rising generation of Americans.

George Cupples (1822–91). *The Green Hand.*

Richard Henry Dana (1815–82). *Two Years Before the Mast.*

It is a happy accident that Dana's name follows that of Cupples. Fifty years ago in "The Green Hand" and "Two Years Before the Mast" England and America held command of the sea in fiction. This is an appropriate place to mention three books by the American writer, Herman Melville (1819–91), "Omoo," "Typee" and "Moby Dick," which are big enough to sail in the fleet with Cupples and Dana. Sea craft are growing larger every year but not sea books, though Mr. Joseph Conrad, Mr. Rudyard Kipling, Mr. Frank Bullen and Mr. Clark Russell are taking us on good voyages under sail and steam.

Alphonse Daudet (1840–97). *Le Petit Chose. Jack. Tartarin of Tarascon. Contes Choisis.*

Among the easiest of French writers to read in the original. Several of his books have been published in English.

Richard Harding Davis. *Gallegher. Van Bibber and Others.*

Fresh and charming short stories by a writer who has not fulfilled the promise of his youth.

Edmondo de Amicis. *Heart; A School Boy's Journal.*

A fine story of schoolboy life, to be found in English translation.

Daniel Defoe (166?–1731). *Robinson Crusoe.*

William De Morgan. *Joseph Vance. Alice-for-Short. Somehow Good.*

Charles Dickens (1812–70).

No list of titles is necessary under the name of Dickens. There are innumerable editions of his works.

Benjamin Disraeli (Lord Beaconsfield, 1804–81). *Vivian Grey. Coningsby. Lothair. Sybil.*

Charles Lutwidge Dodgson ("Lewis Carroll"). *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland. Through the Looking Glass. Silvie and Bruno.*

And we could not be happy without "The Hunting of the Snark" and other verses in Lewis Carroll's "Rhyme and Reason."

Arthur Conan Doyle. *Adventures of Sherlock Holmes. Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes. Micah Clark. The White Company.*

The fame of the Sherlock Holmes stories has thrown somewhat into the background the best of Sir Conan Doyle's work, the two historical romances.

Alexandre Dumas, Père (1803–70).

No list of titles is necessary under Dumas's name. For though he and his "syndicate" of assistants produced a great number of mediocre works, those most frequently met in English are good, "The Three Musketeers," "The Count of Monte Cristo," "The Queen's Necklace" and "Twenty Years After."

George du Maurier (1834–96). *Peter Ibbetson. Trilby.*

Edward Eggleston. *The Hoosier Schoolmaster. The Hoosier Schoolboy.*

George Eliot (Mary Ann Evans, 1819–80).

No titles are necessary under George Eliot's name. Several of her novels are in *Everyman's Library,* and there are other inexpensive editions.

Erckmann-Chatrian (Emile Erckmann and Louis Alexandre Chatrian). *Friend Fritz. The Blockade of Phalsburg. Madame Thérèse. The Story of a Conscript. Waterloo.*

The two last named are in *Everyman's Library.*

Anatole France (Thibault). *Le Crime de Sylvestre Bonnard. From a Mother of Pearl Casket.*

All the works of this writer are being translated into English. The title given above in English is a translated collection of some of his short stories.

Alice French (Octave Thanet). *Stories of a Western Town.*

Elizabeth Gaskell (1810–65). *Cranford.*

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749–1832). *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship and Travels.* In Carlyle's translation.

Oliver Goldsmith (1728–74). *The Vicar of Wakefield. She Stoops to Conquer. The Good-Natured Man.*

Kenneth Grahame. *The Golden Age. Dream Days.*

Jakob and Wilhelm Grimm. *Fairy Tales.* In *Everyman's Library.*

Edward Everett Hale (1822–1909). *The Man Without a Country.*

The volume under this title, published by Little, Brown & Co., contains the best of Dr. Hale's short stories. The title story is a masterpiece of fiction and the greatest of all sermons on patriotism.

Ludovic Halévy. *The Abbé Constantin.*

A charming story in simple French, and to be found translated into English.

Thomas Hardy. *Far from the Madding Crowd. The Return of the Native. The Mayor of Casterbridge. A Pair of Blue Eyes. Under the Greenwood Tree.*

Incomparably the greatest of living novelists of our race. Certain characteristics of his later novels make them neither pleasant nor intelligible to young readers, but any of those here mentioned is as well adapted to the reader of any age as are George Eliot's "Adam Bede" and Thackeray's "Pendennis."

Joel Chandler Harris. *Uncle Remus. Nights with Uncle Remus. Mingo. Free Joe.*

Francis Bret Harte (1839–1902). *The Luck of Roaring Camp.*

The volume of this title, published by Houghton, Mifflin & Co., contains the best of Harte's short stories, and the best remain very good indeed, though since they took the world by storm other writers have given us a truer insight into the life which Harte was the first to discover and proclaim. Harte is a capital humorist in his way, both in his swaggering hearty short stories (see "Colonel Starbottle's Client") and in his parodies (see "Condensed Novels").

Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804–64).

No list of titles is necessary under Hawthorne's name. America has no other literary artist of his stature and perfection, and he is the one American whose works we can say "you ought to read" entire —we dare say it, that is, to American readers.

Maurice Hewlett. *Life and Death of Richard Yea-and-Nay.*

Mr. Hewlett is one of the ten or twelve important living writers of English fiction. I have seen no book of his which is not good. I give only one title; his brilliant and varied achievement in the past decade makes difficult the selection of other titles for this limited list.

Oliver Wendell Holmes (1809–94). *Elsie Venner. Guardian Angel.*

Holmes's fiction is subordinate both to his essays and his poems, and should be postponed until the reader has become a true lover of the Autocrat. The novels are good for the reason, if for no other, that Holmes was one of the rare geniuses who cannot write otherwise than with wisdom and charm.

Anthony Hope (Hawkins). *The Prisoner of Zenda.*

The first in point of time and excellence of a now numerous class of historical novels in which the history and the geography as well as the "story" are fictitious.

William Dean Howells. *A Chance Acquaintance. The Lady of the Aroostook. Dr. Breen's Practice. A Modern Instance. The Rise of Silas Lapham. The Minister's Charge. April Hopes. The Flight of Pony Baker.*

Thomas Hughes (1823–96). *Tom Brown's Schooldays. Tom Brown at Oxford.*

Victor Hugo (1812–85). *Les Miserables. Quatrevingt-Treize. Notre Dame de Paris. Les Travailleurs de la Mer.*

Hugo's novels appear in several English translations.

Henrik Ibsen. *Prose Dramas.*

Edited and translated by William Archer and others. The reading of Ibsen, the greatest dramatist of the nineteenth century, may be postponed until the reader has come to mature views of life.

Washington Irving (1783–1859). *Sketch-Book. Tales of a Traveler. Bracebridge Hall.*

W. W. Jacobs. *Many Cargoes. Light Freights. Dialstone Lane.*

A teller of delightfully droll stories. Like Frank R. Stockton, a much finer artist than the more serious-minded critics would be disposed to admit. It is difficult to select for this list the best of the score of talented short-story writers of the day. Perhaps this is a good place to slip in the name of a contemporary American whose fresh and original stories have deservedly survived their day in the magazines and been collected in volumes—Mr. Sidney Porter, " O. Henry."

Henry James. *Roderick Hudson. Daisy Miller. The American. The Portrait of a Lady. The Princess Casamassima.*

Young readers should beware of misleading chatter about Mr. James which appears in columns of book

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gossip and newspaper comment; it attempts to turn Mr. James into a joke and caricatures his subtlety and obscurity; it is analogous to the flippant and derisive nonsense through which Browning lived to reach the people at last. "Roderick Hudson" is a great novel and is as clear, strong, and easy to read as the work of any other thoughtful novelist you may choose for comparison.

Sarah Orne Jewett (1849–1909). *Country By-Ways. A Country Doctor. A White Heron. Strangers and Wayfarers. The Country of the Pointed Firs.*

Stories of the better classes of New England country folk written in a style of unblemished clarity and sweetness.

Mary Johnston. *Lewis Rand.*

Charles Kingsley (1819–75). *Alton Locke. Hypatia. Westward Ho!*

Rudyard Kipling. *Plain Tales from the Hills. Many Inventions. Wee Willie Winkie. Life's Handicap. Soldiers Three. In Black and White. The Story of the Gadsbys. The Light that Failed. The Jungle Book. The Second Jungle Book. The Day's Work. Captains Courageous. Kim.*

In spite of a curiously eager disposition on the part of current writers to regard Kipling's career as over and done, he is the foremost living writer of short stories in English, and of no other young living

writer can it be so safely averred that he has become one of the established classics of his race.

Friedrich Heinrich Karl de La Motte Fouqué (1777–1843). *Undine.*

Pierre Loti (L. M. J. Viaud). *An Iceland Fisherman.*

This and the autobiographical "Romance of a Child," and several of Loti's books of travel are in English.

Edward G. E. L. Bulwer-Lytton (1801–72). *Harold, the Last of the Saxon Kings. Last Days of Pompeii.*

Lord Lytton is one of the Victorian novelists whose great reputation is growing rapidly less, and deservedly so, but his historical novels are more than worth reading.

George Macdonald (1824–1905). *David Elginbrod. Robert Falconer. Sir Gibbie. At the Back of the North Wind.*

A novelist whose popularity among younger readers is probably less than his great merits.

Xavier de Maistre (1764–1852). *La Jeune Sibérienne.*

Alessandro Manzoni (1785–1873). *The Betrothed Lovers.*

There are several English translations of this most famous of Italian historical romances.

Frederick Marryat (1792–1848). *Jacob Faithful. Peter Simple. Mr. Midshipman Easy. Masterman Ready.*

A. E. W. Mason. *The Four Feathers.*

A story of bravery and cowardice of unusual merit.

Guy de Maupassant (1850–93). *The Odd Number.*

This is an English translation of some of Maupassant's best tales.

George Meredith (1828–1909). *Harry Richmond. Beauchamp's Career. Rhoda Fleming. Evan Harrington.*

At his death the foremost English man of letters. A noble poet and a novelist who easily stands among the few greatest of the century. A taste for Meredith grows on the individual as it has grown on the general world of readers. The novels in this list include not all the greatest but the best for the new reader to try first.

Prosper Mérimée (1803–70). *Colomba.*

In easy French, and has been translated into English.

Silas Weir Mitchell. *Hugh Wynne. Roland Blake.*

Mary Russell Mitford (1786–1855). *Our Village.*

William Morris (1834–96). *The Well at the World's End.*

Readers who chance to like this prose poem by a devoted apostle of liberty and beauty will be led to his other romances in prose and verse.

Mary Noailles Murfree ("Charles Egbert Craddock"). *In the Tennessee Mountains. Down the Ravine. In the Clouds. In the Stranger People's Country.*

Portrays the solitude and pathos of the life of the mountaineers of Tennessee. In sincerity and the genuineness of the substance better than in workmanship.

Nibelungenlied.

The story of the Treasure of the Nibelungs is told for young readers by A. J. Church in "Heroes of Chivalry and Romance." It is also found in "Wagner Opera Stories" by G. E. Barber, and in "The Wagner Story Book" by W. H. Frost. Any critical or biographical work on Wagner will take the reader into this great German legend.

Frank Norris. *The Octopus. The Pit.*

A serious novelist cut off in his prime before his work attained the greatness that it seemed to promise.

Margaret Oliphant (1828–97). *Chronicles of Carlingford. A Beleaguered City.*

Alfred Ollivant. *Bob, Son of Battle.*

A first-rate story of a dog.

Thomas Nelson Page. *Elsket. In Ole Virginia.*

A sincere and sympathetic portrayer of old and new Virginia. As is generally true of American

fictionists, he is better in the short story than in the novel.

Gilbert Parker. *Pierre and His People. The Battle of the Strong. Seats of the Mighty.*

Elizabeth Stuart Phelps. *Fourteen to One. A Singular Life.*

Eden Phillpotts. *Children of the Mist. The Human Boy. The Secret Woman.*

One of the distinguished living novelists of England.

Edgar Allan Poe (1809–49). *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque.*

There are many single-volume editions of Poe's short stories. An inexpensive complete edition of Poe is published by G. P. Putnam's Sons. The best and final edition of Poe is that edited by Stedman and Woodberry.

Jane Porter (1776–1850). *Scottish Chiefs.*

Howard Pyle. *Some Merry Adventures of Robin Hood. The Garden Behind the Moon.*

Mr. Pyle's books are delightful for the illustrations. The competence of his painting and his dramatic and literary imagination make him the foremost American illustrator, and the texts which he writes to accompany his drawings are adequate, though not in themselves remarkable.

Rudolf Erich Raspe. *Surprising Adventures of Baron Münchausen.*

In the translation edited by Thomas Seccombe. A selection of the Münchausen stories for young people made by Dr. Edward Everett Hale, is published by D. C. Heath & Co.

Charles Reade (1814–84). *The Cloister and the Hearth. Hard Cash. Put Yourself in His Place.*

Samuel Richardson (1689–1761). *Clarissa Harlowe.*

There is an abridged edition of this very long novel.

George Sand (A. L. A. Dupin, 1804–76). *Consuelo. The Little Fadette. The Devil's Pool. Mauprat.*

These and others of George Sand's novels are in English.

Walter Scott (1771–1832).

No list of titles is necessary under Scott's name.

Ernest Thompson Seton. *Biography of a Grizzly.*

A nature writer who for the most part wisely and artistically embodies his knowledge of animals in fiction where they are not subjected to those acid tests of fact which have recently betrayed the base metal in some of the other modern writers about nature.

Anna Sewell. *Black Beauty.*

The story of a horse; a tract in the interests of kindness to animals which proved to be more than

a tract, a charming and immensely popular piece of imaginative writing.

Henryk Sienkiwicz. *The Deluge. Quo Vadis. With Fire and Sword.*

In the translation by Jeremiah Curtin.

William Gilmore Simms (1806–70). *The Scout.*

A writer historically important to Americans because he had a great vogue in his day and accomplished much in a time when there was no American literature south of Poe's Richmond. Simms is an inferior writer, but "The Scout" is a vigorous narrative and will interest young readers.

Richard Brinsley Sheridan (1751–1816). *Dramatic Works.*

In *Bohn's Library* and in one volume of *Everyman's Library.*

Joseph Henry Shorthouse. *John Inglesant.*

Annie Trumbull Slosson. *Seven Dreamers. Story-Tell Lib.*

Francis Hopkinson Smith. *Colonel Carter of Cartersville.*

Robert Louis Stevenson (1849–94). *Treasure Island. Prince Otto. Kidnapped. David Balfour. The Merry Men. Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. The Black Arrow. The Master of Ballantrae. St. Ives.*

Frank Richard Stockton (1834–1902). *Rudder Grange. The Casting Away of Mrs. Lecks and Mrs. Aleshine. The Floating Prince and Other Fairy Tales. The Lady or the Tiger? A Chosen Few. A Story-Teller's Pack.*

Harriet Beecher Stowe (1812–96). *Uncle Tom's Cabin.*

Ruth McEnery Stuart. *The Golden Wedding. Sonny.*

Perhaps the wittiest of all contemporaneous writers about southern life.

Jonathan Swift (1667–1745). *Gulliver's Travels.*

There are several editions of "Gulliver" prepared for schools. It is to be found in *Everyman's Library.* The book is, of course, a satirical essay on man; it is also a masterpiece of fictitious narrative.

William Makepeace Thackeray (1811–63).

No list of titles is necessary under this name.

Leof Nicolaevich Tolstoi. *War and Peace.*

Advanced students of French can read the French version of this novel. A good English version is that by Leo Wiener.

Anthony Trollope (1815–82). *The Warden. Barchester Towers. Framley Parsonage. Dr. Thorne. The Small House at Allington. Last Chronicle of Barset.* (The foregoing six constitute the *Chronicles of Barsetshire.*) *Can You Forgive Her? Phineas Finn. Phineas Redux. The Prime Minister. The Duke's Chil-*

dren. The Eustace Diamonds. (The foregoing six constitute the *Parliamentary Novels.*) *Is He Popenjoy? Orley Farm. The Vicar of Bullhampton.* (The last are called the *Manor House Novels.*)

This list, disproportionately long perhaps, seems justifiable because Trollope wrote an incredible number of novels not all of which are equally good, and because his books are in the present quarter century not so widely read as they should be. After Dickens, Thackeray, and George Eliot, who are the highest peaks in the half century (we cannot quite measure Meredith and Hardy yet), Anthony Trollope is easily fourth. And even among the peaks the broad massive plateau of his work seems more and more to have enduring solidity. Like Balzac in France (though little like him, book for book), Trollope has written England's *comédie humaine.* With him quantity is a quality, for he is a master in large part by virtue of his bulk; no other novelist seems to have told so much about the daily life of his nation. The one thing lacking to make Trollope a very great writer of fiction is that his prose is not eloquent; though it is good, it has no moments of supreme goodness; but few other English novelists have sustained such a level of merit through so many volumes.

John Townsend Trowbridge. *Neighbor Jackwood. Jack Hazard and His Fortunes. A Chance for Himself. Doing His Best. Cudjo's Cave. The Tinkham Brothers' Tidemill.*

No other writer of equal ability has devoted himself to books for boys.

Ivan Sergyevich Turgenieff (1818–83). *Fathers and Children. Smoke.*

Several of Turgenieff's novels have been translated into English. The English reader should, if possible, read Russian novels in French.

Alfred de Vigny (1799–1863). *Cinq-Mars.*

This great historical novel is in easy French. It has been published in an English translation.

Mary Arnold Ward (Mrs. Humphrey Ward). *Robert Elsmere.*

An English writer of excellent ideals and deep seriousness, overrated by Americans who seem to think that she is giving them the " true inwardness " of British high life.

Elizabeth Cherry Waltz. *Pa Gladden.*

Humorous and touching stories of a Kentucky farmer.

Charles Dudley Warner (1829–1900). *A Little Journey in the World. The Golden House.*

John Watson (" Ian Maclaren "). *Beside the Bonnie Brier Bush. The Days of Auld Lang Syne.*

Edward Noyes Westcott. *David Harum.*

An illustration of the fact that a true humorous character will catch the fancy of the world, no matter in how defective a plot it is embodied.

Kate Douglas Wiggin (Mrs. Riggs). *The Birds' Christmas Carol. Penelope's Progress. The Story of Patsy. Timothy's Quest. Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm.*

Mary Eleanor Wilkins (Mrs. Freeman). *A Humble Romance. A New England Nun. Jane Field. Pembroke. Jerome, a Poor Man. Silence and Other Stories.*

Owen Wister. *The Virginian. Lady Baltimore.*

Israel Zangwill. *Children of the Ghetto. Dreamers of the Ghetto.*

CHAPTER V

THE READING OF POETRY

WHEN Julia Bryant, the daughter of William Cullen Bryant, was a child, a neighbor of the poet made her first call, and was shown into the parlor. She found the small Julia seated on the floor with an illustrated volume of Milton in her lap. She knew, of course, that the pictures and not the text engaged the child's attention, but by way of beginning an acquaintance, she asked:

"Reading poetry already, little girl"?

Julia looked up and regarded her gravely. Then with an air of politely correcting ignorance, she explained:

"People don't *read* poetry. Papas write poetry, and mamas sing poetry, and little girls learn to say poetry, but nobody reads poetry. That isn't what it's for."

If the several members of all families were as happily accounted for as those in Bryant's household, the Muses would not live so remote from this world. That mothers sing poetry and little girls say it is enough to keep it everlastingly alive. The trouble is that few households are blessed with papas who write poetry; and there are none too many papas who read it.

If we have not learned to read poetry, let us begin now. Suppose we read and commit to memory the following stanza, and then talk a little about it.

Thou wast not born for death, immortal Bird!
No hungry generations tread thee down;
The voice I heard this passing night was heard
In ancient days by emperor and clown:
Perhaps the self-same song that found a path
Through the sad heart of Ruth, when, sick for home,
She stood in tears amid the alien corn;
The same that oft-times hath
Charmed magic casements, opening on the foam
Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn.

This is from Keats's "Ode to a Nightingale." It is one of the most musical, most magical stanzas in all English poetry; that much anyone can tell you who has read the poets. But to tell you in what consists its glory is beyond any critic who is not a poet; nothing of analysis can add to the effect it is making in your ears, in your brain, now that you have committed it to memory. One of the best of English critics—and he was a poet, too—Matthew Arnold, in his essay, "The Study of Poetry," made but a dull and wordy discourse when he tried to tell what the qualities of poetry are. Only by reading the rest of the poem, and then the rest of Keats, and then other poets, can you increase for yourself the delight of those wonderful lines. If they do not tempt you to the great excursion into the poets, you have not read them over, you have not repeated them aloud often enough.

Only for the sake of dwelling upon these lines, and because we have agreed to talk about poetry, and not because our comment can reveal the secret, let us go back and study the stanza.

The nightingale's song is the voice of immortality. It releases the individual soul from the present hour, from the struggle of life and makes it one with the great experiences of the race. The imagination sweeps over all history on the wings of those first four lines, and then carries us into the world of religious story, in the lines recalling the Book of Ruth. And finally we are borne out of the human world into fairyland. All this in a single stanza!

Every poem of high quality, every one of the treasured passages from long poems, makes such a magic flight into the realm of eternal ideas, so that it is commonly said that poetry is "uplifting." Life and death and Heaven and the stars are the poet's subjects. And the poem of common things, in praise of simple virtues and domestic happiness, such as have made Burns and Longfellow and Whittier so dear to the heart, have the same kind of power in less degree; if they do not transport us to Heaven they reveal the seed of immortality in daily circumstance.

Keats bears the imagination over the world and beyond it in a single stanza. All poetry of the highest rank has this power to utter eternity in a few words. And though at first it seems a contradictory thing to say, it is true that the long poem has the same quality of compression; it makes long flights of idea in relatively short compass of words. The

time of reading, the time that the physical eye needs to catch the winged sentences, is nothing. What, you say, "The Faerie Queene," "Paradise Lost," "Hamlet," the "Iliad," the "Idylls of the King" are compressed so that the time it takes to read them is annihilated? Just that. The complete works of a great poet do not fill more space than one or two long novels. Poetry is greater than prose if only because it expresses noble ideas in fewer words; it is language at its highest power. Its rhymes and rhythms are all a means of conveying this power. The person who regards poetry as rhymed sentences that might as well be put into prose, has his eye on the shell of form and has never felt the inner virtues of poetry. Poetry has its forms because only in its forms can it say the most.

But what of the great lines of prose that are as eloquent and compact with thought as any line of poetry? There is only one answer to that. Such lines of prose are poetry too. "In my Father's house are many mansions" is poetry. That it looks like prose on the printed page is a matter of typesetting, and type is only the outermost husk about the shell. Hear that sentence from the Bible, think it and feel it, and you will know that it has high poetic quality. The intensity of language, the heat of high passion has made the diamond; the diamond is more beautiful after it is cut, but cutting cannot make a diamond. The outward form we shall enjoy, but we must look inward for the essential quality. As our Bible is printed, the following passage from Ecclesiastes has

the appearance of prose, yet it has, too, something like the stanzaic divisions of poetry.

Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them;

While the sun, or the light, or the moon, or the stars be not darkened, nor the clouds return after the rain:

In the day when the keepers of the house shall tremble, and the strong men shall bow themselves, and the grinders cease because they are few, and those that look out of the windows be darkened,

And the doors shall be shut in the streets, when the sound of the grinding is low, and he shall rise up at the voice of the bird, and all the daughters of music shall be brought low;

Also when they shall be afraid of that which is high, and fears shall be in the way, and the almond tree shall flourish, and the grasshopper shall be a burden, and desire shall fail: because man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets:

Or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern;

Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.

Whatever else this may be, it is poetry of high power. Millions of men have found in the Bible something which is not in other books, but that it has in common with other great books the miracle of poetic utterance every right view of the Bible must admit. The passage we have just quoted is in beauty equal and not wholly dissimilar to the stanza from Keats. The Biblical poet has into a few words condensed the tragic symbols of death

and sorrow; and from their dust and dissolution his soul has aspired upward to the stars.

If the stanza from Keats and the verse from the Bible are both essentially poetic, what becomes of certain devices of arrangement which are in Keats and not in the Bible poem, such devices as rhymes and regularity of accent? These are but instruments of beauty; the words and their arrangement are the result of the inward passion and beauty of the thought, and we in reading are acted upon by that result, and feel again the passion and idea that produced it.

In inferior poetry cause and effect are reversed or fail altogether. Thousands of poets have tried to make poetry by devices of rhyme and line division, by deliberately arranging vowels and consonants into pleasant sounds; almost any conventionally educated person can learn to do this, just as almost anybody with practice can learn to play a piece on the piano and carefully obey every sign on the music score. But no music results, only an empty regularity of sound. Because there are so many of these mechanical pianists, the sound of the piano seldom attracts and arrests us. Because so many verses, thousands in the monthly magazines, have merely the outward form of poetry, thousands of persons have come to believe that poetry is an artificial trick of words. The heart of poetry is emotion and a sense of beauty. The great emotions, patriotism, religion, love, acting upon the poet, turn his words into magic sequences. When the poetry is finished

and arranged on the printed page, we find, true, that it has a form, that it has metrical excellences, that its varieties of sound are thus and so; the poets are masters of at least as many technicalities as the little versifiers. The test comes when we read the sequence of words cooled, as it were, into a set form, and touched by their appeal to our inward sense feel them start into warm life again.

If we go far enough in our reading to study poetry, then we shall expect to learn about the technical methods and rhetorical elements of verse; we shall expect to learn about the lives of the poets and about their growth in their art. Just so the lover of music will wish to study the laws of sound, even the mechanical and physical properties of musical instruments, mastering from a scientific point of view the conditions and materials of the art. Such study helps us to appreciate great music and great poetry. But it is not necessary. The orchestra will act upon us without our knowing how it is arranged. The true poem will act on us if we know nothing more than our own language and our own feelings. Our pleasant task is to offer ourselves to the great poem with attention and a desire for pleasure.

Attention and a desire for pleasure are easily distracted in those who have not the habit of reading poetry. And poetry is often surrounded by unnecessary distractions. The very zeal of those who would draw our sympathies to it leads them to stand in the light attempting to explain what needs no

explanation, what, indeed, cannot be explained. The lecturer upon music too often talks while the orchestra is playing. After one knows Shakespeare, a discourse on the "lessons of the tragedies" may enlarge one's understanding. But such disquisitions are a forbidding introduction to any poet. We have in America many worthy persons who lecture on the ethical beliefs of Robert Browning. Of course any interest, any occasion that will bring in a new "convert," and lead him to think of Browning at all, is a gain—the principal excuse for lectures and criticisms is that they do invite wandering souls in to meet a poet. But it is usually true that two hours' reading in Browning is more delightful and more profitable than a two hours' lecture about him. And it is often the case that lectures about his philosophy repel readers who might enjoy his poetry. The lesson of poetry is beauty; the meaning of poetry is exalted emotions. The private special beliefs of the poet are of interest, because those beliefs raised the poet's intelligence to a white heat, and that heat left us verse crystals which are beautiful long after the poet's beliefs have passed away. Through his beliefs the poet reaches to great passions that endure, and anyone can understand them without knowing how the poet arrived at them. If a poet cannot deliver his message, a critic cannot do it for him. Shelley was a worshiper of democracy; Shakespeare was a believer in the divinity of kings. Browning was an optimist. Omar Khayyám, as Edward Fitzgerald rendered him in English poetry, was a kind

of pessimistic fatalist. All this is interesting to know. But the reader of poetry does not, in the immediate enjoyment of the poets, vex himself with these diversities of faith. Hear the poets themselves:

Shakespeare's unrighteous king, Macbeth, hedged round by his enemies, dulled in feeling yet still keenly intelligent, hears of the death of his queen.

> She should have died hereafter;
> There would have been a time for such a word.
> To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow,
> Creeps in this petty pace from day to day
> To the last syllable of recorded time;
> And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
> The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!
> Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player
> That struts and frets his hour upon the stage
> And then is heard no more. It is a tale
> Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
> Signifying nothing.

Shelley, the lover of human liberty and the wide freedom of nature, chants to the West Wind:

> Make my thy lyre, even as the forest is;
> What if my leaves are falling like its own!
> The tumult of thy mighty harmonies
>
> Will take from both a deep, autumnal tone,
> Sweet though in sadness. Be thou, spirit fierce,
> My spirit! Be thou me, impetuous one!
>
> Drive my dead thoughts over the universe
> Like withered leaves to quicken a new birth!
> And, by the incantation of this verse,

SHELLEY

Scatter, as from an unextinguished hearth
Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind!
Be through my lips to unawakened earth

The trumpet of a prophecy! O, wind,
If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?

Hear Browning, the athletic optimist:

The year's at the spring
And day's at the morn;
Morning's at seven;
The hillside's dew-pearled;
The lark's on the wing;
The snail's on the thorn:
God's in his heaven—
All's right with the world!

And of himself, at the close of his life, Browning sings:

One who never turned his back but marched breast forward,
Never doubted clouds would break,
Never dreamed, though right were worsted, wrong would triumph,
Held we fall to rise, ere baffled to fight better,
Sleep to wake.

Finally listen to the beauty-loving pessimist that Fitzgerald brought out of Persia and set among the jewels in the crown of English poetry:

So when the Angel of the darker Drink
At last shall find you by the River-brink,
And, offering his Cup, invite your Soul
Forth to your Lips to quaff—you shall not shrink.

I sent my Soul through the Invisible,
Some letter of that After-life to spell:
And after many Days my Soul returned
And said, "Behold, Myself am Heaven and Hell."

Here are four poets of different generations and different beliefs; large volumes have been written to expound each and tell us the meaning, the philosophy, the development, the tendencies, the influence of this poet and that. But see them together: no explanation of their *meanings* can divide them, for they are all poets, and no group of men on earth are liker one to another *in purpose* than great poets are like to each other. They are all singing the eternal in words of unmatchable power. They are wondrously alike in their celebration of beauty and high feelings.

The great poet differs not from other great poets, but from inferior ones; he differs from his equals mainly in manner of expression. The new poet is he who brings the old messages in ways that no other poet has conceived, and the old poet is always new, because he has attained to beautiful utterance of ideas that we cannot outgrow, which indeed most of mankind have not yet reached. Prose becomes old-fashioned (except the Bible, which has a special place in our life and is, moreover, largely poetic in substance); the prose of Shakespeare's time and Milton's is difficult to read, it seems written in an antique language. But Shakespeare and Milton are the poetry of to-day and of uncounted to-morrows.

Not to read poetry is to miss the greatest ideas

in the world, to disregard the noblest and most exalted work that the human mind has achieved. To poetry all other arts and sciences are in some way inferior. Not music, nor painting, nor the laws of government, nor the discoveries of mechanics, nor anything else that man has done has the right of poetry to be called divine, except only that of which poetry is the vehicle, which is in a sense one with it, religious prophecy and worship. Whether religion and poetry are one, as some philosophers hold, it is a fact of history that the great religious prophets have had the gifts of poets, and the poets are all singers of hymns and incantations which stir in our hearts the religious sense. We need not go further into this question than to this simple truth, that the man who has no poetry in him is likely to be an irreligious man, not necessarily lacking in goodness and righteousness, but lacking the upward aspiration of the truly religious mind.

Come, poet, come!
A thousand laborers ply their task,
And what it tends to scarcely ask,
And trembling thinkers on the brink
Shiver and know not how to think.
To tell the purport of their pain,
And what our silly joys contain;
In lasting lineaments portray
The substance of the shadowy day;
Our real and inner deeds rehearse,
And make our meaning clear in verse:
Come, Poet, come! or but in vain
We do the work or feel the pain,
And gather up the seeming gain,

Unless before the end thou come
To take, ere they are lost, their sum.

Come, Poet, come!
To give an utterance to the dumb,
And make vain babblers silent, come;
A thousand dupes point here and there,
Bewildered by the show and glare;
And wise men half have learned to doubt
Whether we are not best without.
Come, Poet; both but wait to see
Their error proved to them in thee.

Come, Poet, come!
In vain I seem to call. And yet
Think not the living times forget.
Ages of heroes fought and fell
That Homer in the end might tell;
O'er groveling generations past
Upstood the Doric fane at last;
And countless hearts on countless years
Had wasted thoughts, and hopes, and fears,
Rude laughter and unmeaning tears,
Ere England Shakespeare saw, or Rome
The pure perfection of her dome.
Others, I doubt not, if not we,
The issue of our toils shall see;
Young children gather as their own
The harvest that the dead had sown,
The dead forgotten and unknown.

ARTHUR HUGH CLOUGH.

CHAPTER VI

THE READING OF POETRY—(*Continued*)

IN almost every American household there will be some volume of poetry through which the young reader can make his entrance into the enchanted world; there will be a volume of Shakespeare, an old copy of "Paradise Lost" or the works of Longfellow or Tennyson. In our day a desire to read is seldom thwarted by lack of books. Indeed, it sometimes seems as if the very abundance of books made us so familiar with their backs that we do not value the treasures inside. The biographies of our grandfathers tell us of walks of five miles to secure some coveted volume, and a volume so secured was not skimmed or neglected; the effort to get it made it doubly precious.

If one is left to choose the door through which to enter the realm of poetry, a good anthology will prove a broad approach. There is none better than Palgrave's "Golden Treasury of Songs and Lyrics." It is inexpensive, so that anyone can save enough pennies to buy it. It is convenient to carry in one's pocket, a virtue that makes it preferable to larger anthologies, to those old-fashioned "household collections" printed in double columns. If all our men

and boys had the "Golden Treasury" in their coat pockets, what a civilization we should have at the end of ten years! In order to keep up with us the ladies would have to provide pockets in their dresses or carry more spacious handbags than the tyranny of style now permits.

The selections in Palgrave or in the four volumes of Ward's "English Poets," are so rich and varied that no reader can fail to find his own poet, and the next step will be to get a larger selection from that poet's works. All the English poets have been published in inexpensive volumes of selections, many of them in the same *Golden Treasury Series;* and as poets, like other human beings, are not always at their best, an edition which contains only the best will save the reader from the unfortunate experience of meeting a poet for the first time in his inferior work. When we have learned really to like a poet, we shall wish to have his complete works, but for the young reader most modern poets are better for the suppression of their less admirable passages. Only three or four—Spenser, Shakespeare, Milton, our greatest poets—wrote long poems which to be enjoyed at their fullest must be read entire. Although it is true that poetry consists of great lines and that a collection of short poems and passages will be enough to nourish the soul for its whole earthly life, yet supreme poetry is built on a mighty plan. Brief lyrics and bits of song are like jewels, precious, complete, beautiful. Great poems, epics and dramas, are like cathedrals in which the jewels are set in the

walls and in the windows. One might read all the fine passages from Shakespeare and yet not feel Shakespeare's highest, that is, his entire, poetic power.

For the marvelous speeches and songs, however satisfying in themselves, lose some of their meaning when taken out of the structure of which they are a part. The stained glass window is beautiful in the artist's studio, but when it is set in the church and the light falls through it, it becomes part of a beauty greater than its own. So, too, "Macbeth" is greater than Shakespeare's lyrics, "Paradise Lost" is greater than all of Milton's short poems taken together. The true reader of poetry will pass beyond the delight of the perfect stanza to the wider joy of the complete drama, the complete epic.

In approaching a long poem, the modern impatient reader is discouraged sometimes by the number of pages of solid verse which follow those first pages into which he has plunged. It is well to remember that in reading poetry, a little traveling of the eye takes the imagination on long journeys, and that imagination will join for us the first page and the last even if we have spent six months in making the intervening journey. "Hamlet" need not be read in a day. If one reads a few lines at a time one will soon be in the depths of it, and there is no danger of losing one's way. We can spend a month in the first perusal or we can run rapidly through it in the three hours which it is supposed to occupy on the stage. We can go backward and forward in

it, pause as long as we will on a single speech, or fly swiftly upon the wings of the action. The sense of leisure, of independence of hourly circumstance, is one of the spiritual uses of poetry. The poet and our own nature will determine the time for us. When we follow the pageant of Shakespeare's sad histories of the death of kings, we shall not, I hope, comport ourselves like tourists hurrying through a picture gallery in order that we may have "done" it before our train goes. We shall not be so misguided as to plume ourselves when we enter in our diary: "Read two plays of Shakespeare this week." Reading that consists merely in passing the eye over the page is not reading at all. When we become conscious of turning pages without any inward response, it is time to lay the book down and do something else. When we are really reading, we shall not be conscious of the book and we shall not know how many pages we have read—until we wake up out of dreamland and come back into our own world.

Two or three plays of Shakespeare are being read every year in every high school in America. It is a common experience of teachers that the pupils regard Shakespeare's plays as the hardest part of the prescribed reading. One reason is that these dramatic poems are through a regrettable necessity made the text of lessons in language. The atmosphere of study and duty surrounding "A Midsummer Night's Dream" in the classroom takes the charm out of that fairy play. This is not the fault of the teachers and it is not for us to criticise them;

the wisest leaders in education have not found a way to make the study of Shakespeare in school less laborious than it is. And many of them think that it is well that lessons should be hard nuts to crack, that the young mind is better disciplined if its schoolday tasks are not made too delightful and easy. Some teachers believe that the old-fashioned hard digging at books is being in too large a measure replaced by kindergarten methods, which are so unadvisedly extended that even a geometry lesson is treated as a game.

For the present we will keep our consideration of the uses and delights of reading apart from the problems of the schools, and regard Shakespeare as we regard Scott—a friend to enjoy in leisure hours. I should advise, then, that pupils who are reading Shakespeare in school select other plays than those prescribed in class and come to them as to a novel chosen for pleasure. If the class work requires a study of "A Midsummer Night's Dream," let the young reader try "The Tempest" by himself. If "Julius Cæsar" is a part of the winter's school task, let us in vacation time slip "Macbeth" or "Henry V" into our pockets. And while our friends in the other hammock are reading a romance of the hour, let us be reading a romance of the ages. When we are tired of reading and are ready to play that game of tennis, our opponent, who has been reading a book that he bought on the newsstand at the railroad station, will not necessarily beat us, because we know what he does not know,

that a gift of tennis balls comes into the plot of "Henry V."

The Dauphin of France sends Henry the tennis balls for a mocking gift, and Henry answers:

> When we have matched our rackets to these balls,
> We will, in France, by God's grace, play a set
> Shall strike his father's crown into the hazard.
> Tell him he hath made a match with such a wrangler
> That all the courts of France will be disturbed
> With chaces.

That has a spirit which your friend will not find in the excellent story of a school game which he has been reading, "How Ralph Saved the Day."

The great poems receive us on any good ground of interest which we choose to tread. Would you have a romantic novel? Shakespeare provides that in "As You Like It" and "Twelfth Night." Or a military adventure? There is "Henry Fifth." Or a love tragedy? There is "Romeo and Juliet." These satisfy our primitive liking for a good story. And so in some measure do all great poems, for the great poems are epics and dramas, that is, stories in verse. Literature finds its best structural material in action and event, and language is best suited to the expression of actions, perhaps because it has been made by a world of workers and doers. The most effective means of conveying abstract ideas is through story. The most moving sections of the Bible are narrative, the greatest lessons are taught in parables and instances. "Paradise Lost" is a narrative of

great vigor, for all the dull debates and arguments; and if it was not Milton's primary intention to tell a great story for its own sake, nevertheless he did tell a great story and we can enjoy it for its own sake long before we have begun, and long after we have ceased, to be interested in his theology and philosophy.

To say that great poets, Homer, Virgil, Dante, Spenser, Shakespeare, are romancers as truly as are the writers of prose novels is not to belittle poetry. The highest thoughts can be conveyed in a story. When a great poetic story-teller ceases for too many lines to be master of narrative, it will often be found that some other poetic qualities have for the moment died out of him too. And when he attempts to convey great ideas with little regard to their place in a moving sequence of events, he pays the penalty of not being read, he loses hold of the reader's interest. The most titanic case of the failure of high poetic thoughts to win their way to the common heart of man, because of the disregard of narrative form, is Browning's "The Ring and the Book." There the story, a terrible and touching story, is told over a dozen times, and not once told well. Imbedded in its strange shapelessness are wonderful ideas and passages of intense beauty. As a heap of poetry it is the only production of the Victorian age that has the magnitude of Shakespeare and the classic epics. Other poems of Browning's, "Clive" and "Ivan Ivanovitch," show that he had narrative gifts. Some scenes in his dramas are in emotional energy

and narrative progression unrivaled by any poet since Shakespeare. But in "The Ring and the Book," into which he put his whole heart, he would not or could not tell his story as the experience of all ages has shown that stories must be told: his poem does not move forward in a continuously high and noble style. And so most of the world of readers are deprived of the richness with which he freighted from his prodigal mind and great soul his mighty rudderless ship that goes down in midocean.

Shakespeare told good stories in almost all his plays. He did not invent the stories, but he selected them from the literature of the world and from other Elizabethan writers, and then enriched the narrative with every kind of beauty and significance which it would hold. On account of their excellence as narratives and their intensely human and stirring materials, the plays of Shakespeare enjoyed some measure of popularity even in their own time, if the scholars have rightly informed us; and the plays have continued to hold the stage and to interest many of the "great variety of readers" who are addressed in one of the introductions to the first collected edition of Shakespeare's works. In our time the influence of the schools has insured popular acquaintance with Shakespeare as an object of serious study. On the other hand, the great increase in the quantity of prose fiction, and the fact that it is easier to read thin prose than rich poetry, have obscured for many readers the elementary delight of Shakespeare's plays as fictitious romances.

One reason that the inexperienced reader regards the reading of Shakespeare as an unusual operation of eye and brain is that we are not accustomed to read the drama of our own time; so that we have not the habit of following naked dialogue accompanied only by a few terse stage directions. Since Shakespeare's time our literature has not been so rich in drama as in other forms. Some of our plays—those that have succeeded on the stage and those written in conventional dramatic form without regard to performance on the stage—are worth reading. But the public does not encourage the printing of them. Many of our writers shrewdly make double use of their ideas and turn them both into stage form and into prose fiction. The large number of dramatized novels and "novelized" dramas—Shakespeare himself dramatized novels—shows that in England and America we regard the playbook as something for the actor to learn and represent to us in spoken word and action. In France the latest play is for sale in the bookshops like the latest novel. If our stage is to return to high literary standards, there must grow up in our public an audience of intelligent playreaders as well as playgoers. The more intelligently we read plays, the more there will be worth reading; we can help the stage to attain and hold a better level of excellence by demanding of it that its productions shall be "literary," that is, readable.

That Shakespeare is the single dramatist in our language whom we feel we ought to read is regrettable. It sets him apart in a solitude which is as artificial

in its way as the attempt of some critics to group him in a "school of playwrights." He is solitary in greatness, quite lonely among his many contemporaries [1] in drama, but the form he used, narrative dialogue, ought to be as familiar to us as the novel. If ten people read "The Vicar of Wakefield" to one that reads "She Stoops to Conquer," the reason is not that "The Vicar" is better work, but that the printed play looks strange to the eyes of our reading public. Plato put his philosophy in dramatic dialogue, apparently with the intention of choosing a popular and readable form. And the author of the Shakespearian drama seems to have felt that he had chosen the most popular and practical vehicle of ideas. Perhaps, if he had known to what a low condition Puritan prejudice, the social weaknesses of stage life and other causes were to bring dramatic literature, he might have turned his narrative genius into other than dramatic form.

That we are not readers of plays is no special fault of this age. A hundred years ago Charles and Mary Lamb found a wide audience for their "Tales from Shakespeare." The publisher announced in the second edition that the "Tales," intended primarily for children, had been found "an acceptable and improving present to young ladies advancing to the state of womanhood." If Shakespeare was to be retold for the young, it was fortunate that Charles Lamb was selected as the emissary from the land of poetry to those who had never made the great adven-

[1] See page 56.

ture beyond the confines of prose. Yet it is hard to believe that Lamb's "Tales" are necessary to any but lovers of Lamb. There is a danger that the young reader, for whom he designed the book as a door to Shakespeare, will linger in the vestibule, content with the genuine riches that are there, and will not go on to the greater riches of Shakespeare himself. Shakespeare told the stories better than another can tell them, and anyone who knows enough of the English language to read Lamb's "Tales" will find Shakespeare's plays intelligible to read, just as when performed on the stage they are intelligible to the people in the gallery, even to those in the boxes. Repeated readings with some reference to simple explanatory notes will make the deep meanings and fine beauties ever more and more clear.

The plays which a beginner should read are, "A Midsummer Night's Dream," "The Merchant of Venice," "As You Like It," "Twelfth Night," "The Tempest," "Henry IV," "Henry V," "Richard III," "Romeo and Juliet," "Julius Cæsar," "Hamlet," "Othello," "King Lear," and "Macbeth." The other plays and the poems may, for various reasons, be reserved for the time when one no longer needs advice about reading.

We shall have gained much of the freedom of soul which is the necessary condition of reading poetry, if we make a New Year's resolution not to be frightened away from the real mysteries of Shakespeare by the false mysteries of his editors and critics.[1]

[1] See pages 251–4.

Shakespeare speaks our language, but the scholars speak a language which they invented, as if they intended to hold their authority by wrapping themselves in impenetrable obscurities which common folk would not try to master. Let us not be deceived. "The Tempest" was not written for university professors. Let us open it with the same confident curiosity that we should bring to "Robinson Crusoe" or "Ivanhoe."

And after you have read "The Tempest," what do you remember to have found difficult? Is it not clearer than daylight, that enchanted island where Prospero, the exiled duke, has lived twelve years with his daughter Miranda? Is it not a simple and sweet romance that Prince Ferdinand should be wrecked on the island and should fall in love with Miranda and that she should fall in love with him, the first man she has seen except her father? Is it not clear that Prospero, a student of magic, has gained control of the spirits of the island and has his blithe servant, Ariel, and his brutal servant, Caliban? Did you find any difficulty in understanding that when the wicked brother, who cheated Prospero of his dukedom, is cast ashore upon the island, Prospero pardons him and gets his dukedom back? What is obscure in this wonder tale? "Cinderella" and "The Sleeping Beauty" are made of the same stuff, and we hear them at our mothers' knees before we are able to read at all.

But there is more in "The Tempest" than a childish fairy tale. Yes, much more, but that more

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is insinuated into the story, it is embroidered upon it, it comes to us without effort of ours, for the poet is a Prospero and teaches us, as Prospero taught Miranda, by art and nature and not by laborious counsel. You will feel as you follow the fairy story that the spirit of nature has stolen over you unawares, that Caliban represents the evil in the natural world and Ariel the good, and that both are obedient to the bidding of man's intelligence. So much philosophy will come to you of itself; it is not a dull lesson to knit your brows over; you need seek no lecturer to expound it to you. A song of Ariel will linger in your ear. All that is required of you is that your senses be wide awake and that your fancy be free from bookish anxiety and ready to be played upon. The miracle will be wrought for you. You need only sit, like Ferdinand, and watch the masque which the wizard evokes—"a most majestic vision, and harmoniously charming." There will remain with you some speech, grave with philosophy and luminous with imagery, such as this:

> These our actors,
> As I foretold you, were all spirits, and
> Are melted into air, into thin air;
> And, like the baseless fabric of this vision,
> The cloud capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces,
> The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
> Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve,
> And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,
> Leave not a rack behind. We are such stuff
> As dreams are made on; and our little life
> Is rounded with a sleep.

It is better, perhaps, to read the comedies and histories before the tragedies. The comedies and histories are simpler in motive, and through lighter thoughts give one the feeling for Shakespeare's diction and prepare one to enter the tragedies that treat of higher matters. It is because tragedy is concerned with greater ideas, not because it ends unhappily, that it is greater poetry than comedy. It deals with more important motives and more serious events, and its thought is complete; the career of Hamlet, or of Macbeth, is finished, and the ideas of life that informed the career and shaped the events are carried out to their fullest. Tragedy does not consist in the piling up of corpses in the last act; the end of the characters is nothing in itself. Shakespeare always rounds off the conclusion with rapid strokes; having done with the ideas and motives that lead to the end he has little interest in the mere death of his characters. It is the "way to dusty death" that interests him and us and makes the tragedy profound. To those readers referred to in a previous chapter, who do not like sad endings, we can now give another answer. They put too much thought upon the ending and too little upon the story that leads to the end. Whoever does not like tragedy does not like serious ideas, and whoever does not read tragedy does not read the greatest poetry. For the greatest poetry must consist of the most important ideas. Not only upon beauty of form and magic of phrase, but on the heart, the content, depends the greatness of a poem.

LIST OF BOOKS OF POETRY

(*Supplementary to Chapter VI*)

COLLECTIONS AND ANTHOLOGIES OF POETRY

The English Poets, edited by T. H. Ward, and published by Macmillan, in four volumes, at $1 each.

On the whole, the most satisfactory collection of English poetry. Each of the chief poets is represented by several selections, and the introductory criticisms are in themselves a liberal education.

Little Masterpieces of Poetry, edited by Henry Van Dyke, in six volumes, and published by Doubleday, Page & Co.

The poems are divided according to form; one volume containing ballads; another, odes and sonnets; another, lyrics; and so on. This is a rational, but not a practical, principle of division, for it is better to have the selections, say, from Keats, together in one's anthology than to have his sonnets in one volume and his lyrics in another. A poet and his poetry are very definite units, but the lines between lyrics and ballads and odes are not sharp and, on the whole, not important.

Lyra Heroica, edited by William Ernest Henley, and published by Charles Scribner's Sons.

Called "a book of verse for boys"; really a book of verse for everybody, consisting of the martial, the

heroic, the patriotic, from the old English ballads to Rudyard Kipling.

A Victorian Anthology, edited by Edmund Clarence Stedman, and published by Houghton, Mifflin & Co.

A remarkably adequate collection of English poems of the last seventy years.

An American Anthology, edited by Edmund Clarence Stedman, and published by Houghton, Mifflin & Co.

Not only a wise selection of the best American poetry, but a complete survey of the poetic utterance of this country, from a biographical and historical point of view.

The Golden Treasury, edited by Francis Turner Palgrave, and published by Macmillan (see page 109 of this Guide).

The Golden Treasury, second series, edited by Francis Turner Palgrave.

This continues the first *Golden Treasury* and includes the Victorian poets. It is not so complete as Stedman's *Anthology,* but costs only half as much.

The Children's Treasury of Lyrical Poetry, edited by Francis Turner Palgrave.

The Children's Garland from the Best Poets, edited by Coventry Patmore.

The two foregoing are in the *Golden Treasury Series,* and published by Macmillan.

Elizabethan Lyrics, edited by Felix E. Schelling.

An inexpensive collection, published by Ginn & Co., covering the same period as is covered by about one sixth of the *Golden Treasury,* but in larger type and so pleasanter to read.

Seventeenth Century Lyrics, edited by Felix E. Schelling.

Continues the volume mentioned above.

The Blue Poetry Book, edited by Andrew Lang.

A good collection of verse intended by the editor for young people, and selected by him wisely, but quite whimsically, from poets he happens to like.

Golden Numbers, edited by Kate Douglas Wiggin and Nora Archibald Smith.

An excellent anthology intended for youth.

Oxford Book of English Verse, edited by Arthur T. Quiller-Couch.

A handsome book which represents, in less degree than most anthologies, the traditional standards of excellence or traditionally excellent poets, and in rather greater degree the fine taste of the editor for the best.

English and Scottish Popular Ballads, edited by Francis James Child.

This is a selection in a single volume from the great edition of the ballads by Professor Child. It is equally for the student and the reader. In the *Cambridge Poets,* published by Houghton, Mifflin & Co.

Specimens of English Dramatic Poets, edited by Charles Lamb.

Passages that pleased Lamb in the works of Shakespeare's contemporaries. Interesting to a reader of Elizabethan drama and to a reader of Lamb.

INDIVIDUAL POETS

Æschylus (525–456 b.c.). *Lyrical Dramas.*

In *Everyman's Library.*

Thomas Bailey Aldrich (1836–1907). *Poems.*

Household Edition. Aldrich was a careful editor of his own work and this volume is complete in its inclusions and its omissions. It is one of the few volumes of American poetry worth owning.

Aristophanes (about 450–380 b.c.). *Comedies.*

In two volumes of *Bohn's Library,* translated by W. J. Hickie.

Matthew Arnold (1822–88). *Poetical Works.*

The Globe Edition, published by Macmillan, which costs $1.75, is the best. Most of the chief British poets can be had in this edition. The Cambridge Edition, published by Houghton, Mifflin & Co., costs a little more the volume, but it is prefer-

able on the whole in point of manufacture and readability. The young reader of Arnold may begin with the narrative poem, "Sohrab and Rustum."

Francis Beaumont (158?–1616). *Dramatic Works.*

The best selection of the plays of Beaumont and Fletcher is the two volumes, edited by J. St. Loe Strachey in the *Mermaid Series,* published by Charles Scribner's Sons. In this series are, in the words of the title page, "The Best Plays of the Old Dramatists." A taste for Elizabethan drama is as well left undeveloped until after a fair acquaintance has been formed with the plays of Shakespeare.

William Blake (1757–1827). *Songs of Innocence. Songs of Experience.*

There are several collections of Blake's lyrics in single-volume editions. A good one is that with an introductory essay by Lawrence Housman. Blake's lyrics of children and his "Tiger, Tiger, Burning Bright" will be found in many of the anthologies.

Thomas Edward Brown (1830–97). *Collected Poems.*

A remarkable English poet, but little known to the general public until the posthumous publication of his work in 1900 by Macmillan & Co., in the single-volume Globe Edition, which contains the works of Shelley, Tennyson, and other great poets; Brown is worthy of that distinguished company.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning (1809–61). *Poetical Works.*

In one volume, in Macmillan's Globe Edition. "The Sonnets from the Portuguese" are to be found in a small volume by themselves. They are the best of Mrs. Browning's work. The new reader of Mrs. Browning should begin after page 150 in the Macmillan edition and read only the shorter poems.

ROBERT BROWNING (1812–89). *Complete Poetic and Dramatic Works.*

The Cambridge Edition is the best, in one volume. The Globe Edition is in two volumes. The two volumes in *Everyman's Library* contain all of Browning's poems written up to 1864. A good volume for the young reader is "The Boys' Browning," which contains poems of action and incident. An inexpensive volume, published by Smith, Elder & Co., called "The Brownings for the Young," contains a good variety of Browning, with some selections from Mrs. Browning.

WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT (1794–1878). *Poetical Works.*

The poems of Bryant are published in one volume by D. Appleton & Co. Bryant's translations of the "Iliad" and the "Odyssey" are better than most poetic versions of Homer in simplicity and dignity. The young reader cannot do better than to meet Homer in Bryant before he learns Greek enough to meet Homer himself.

ROBERT BURNS (1759–96). *Poems, Songs, and Letters.*

The complete work of Burns in the Globe Edition (Macmillan).

George Gordon Noel Byron (1788–1824). *Poetry of Byron.*

A selection by Matthew Arnold in the *Golden Treasury Series.*

Charles Stuart Calverley (1831–84). *Fly Leaves.*

A taste for refined parody indicates the possession of a critical sense. Coarse parody which implies no intimate knowledge of the poet parodied is not worth while. The reader who appreciates Calverley's delicious verses will have learned to appreciate the serious modern poets. Other writers of humorous verse, including parodies which are delicate and witty, are J. K. Stephen, Mr. Owen Seaman, Henry Cuyler Bunner.

Thomas Campbell (1777–1844).

Enough of Campbell will be found in Ward's Poets.

George Chapman (1559–1634). *Dramas.*

One volume in the *Mermaid Series.* (See pages 243–8 of this Guide.)

Geoffrey Chaucer (1340–1400). *Canterbury Tales.*

A volume in *Everyman's Library* contains eighteen of the tales, slightly simplified in spelling and vocabulary, said to be the first successful attempt to

modernize Chaucer, for the benefit of the ordinary reader, without destroying the essential quality of the original. But with the glossary and notes found in "The Student's Chaucer," edited by W. W. Skeat, the lover of poetry will find himself able to read Chaucer in the original form without great difficulty.

Arthur Hugh Clough (1819–61). *Poems.*

In the *Golden Treasury Series.* Readers of poetry who have not met Clough have an entirely new poetical experience before them in "The Bothie," a narrative poem. It should be tried after Longfellow's "Miles Standish" and "Evangeline." Clough was not among the greatest Victorian poets, but there is room for him in an age like ours which is said, whether justly or not, to be lacking in poetic voices. In this connection readers may turn to Clough's poem, "Come, Poet Come!" (see page 107 of this Guide).

Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772–1834). *Poetical Works.*

In the Globe Edition. The single volume in *Everyman's Library* is adequate.

William Cowper (1731–1800). *Poetical Works.*

In the Globe Edition.

Dante Alighieri (1265–1321). *Divina Commedia.*

Cary's translation is in *Everyman's Library.* The best way on the whole for English readers to learn

their Dante is through Charles Eliot Norton's prose translation (see page 210 of this Guide).

Thomas Dekker (157?–163?). *Dramas.*

In the *Mermaid Series.*

John Donne (1573–1631). *Poems.*

In the *Muses Library* (Charles Scribner's Sons). A wonderful poet, who, perhaps, is not to be read until one's taste for poetry has grown certain, but a liking for whom in mature years is an almost infallible proof of true poetic appreciation.

John Dryden (1631–1700). *Poetical Works.*

In the Globe Edition and also in the Cambridge Edition. The reader should first read Dryden's odes and lyrical pieces; his satires may be deferred.

George Eliot (Mary Ann Evans, 1819–80). *Poems.*

In one volume, published by Doubleday, Page & Co., and to be found in any complete edition of her works. Her reputation as a novelist has overshadowed her excellence as a poet. "The Choir Invisible" is one of the noble poems of the century.

Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803–82). *Poems.*

In one volume, published by Houghton, Mifflin & Co. Emerson is the most exalted spirit of our literature, and his poems condense and refine the best ideas to be found in his prose.

Euripides (480–406 B.C.). *Dramas.*

In two volumes in *Everyman's Library.*

Everyman and Other Miracle Plays.

In *Everyman's Library.* See also "Specimens of Pre-Shakespearean Drama," edited by J. M. Manly (Ginn & Co.). The recent stage production of "Everyman" has created a new popular interest in very early English dramas. The value of most of them is historical rather than intrinsically poetic.

Eugene Field. *A Little Book of Western Verse.*

Contains the familiar poems for and about children.

Edward Fitzgerald (1809–83). *Translation of the Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám.*

There are innumerable editions of this famous poem. An inexpensive one is published by Houghton, Mifflin & Co.

John Fletcher (1579–1625). *Dramas.*

With Beaumont in the *Mermaid Series.*

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749–1832). *Dramatic and Poetic Works.*

The dramas, translated by Walter Scott and others, are in *Bohn's Library.* American readers will be interested in Bayard Taylor's poetic version of "Faust."

Oliver Goldsmith (1728–74). *Poems, etc.*

Goldsmith's few poems are to be found in a good edition of his works in one volume, published by Crowell & Co.

Thomas Gray (1716–71). *Poetical Works.*

In one volume, in the Aldine Edition (Macmillan). Readers of the familiar "Elegy in a Country Churchyard" need only to be told that a half dozen of Gray's other poems are equally fine; and they should not overlook the delightful "Ode on the Death of Mr. Walpole's Cat."

Kate Greenaway. *Marigold Garden. Under the Window.*

Miss Greenaway's delightful pictures of children would entitle her to a place among the poets, even if she had not done the little rhymes that go with her drawings.

Francis Bret Harte (1839–1902). *Poetical Works.*

In one volume, published by Houghton, Mifflin & Co.

Heinrich Heine (1797–1856). *Poems.*

Heine's lyrics have tempted the talents of many translators. The finest collection of verses from Heine in English is that by Emma Lazarus, herself a true poet.

William Ernest Henley. *Poems.*

Henley's one volume of poems, a slender volume, published by Scribner, places him high among the secondary poets of nineteenth century England.

George Herbert (1593–1633). *Poems.*

Herbert's poems with his "Life" by Izaak Walton, are published by Walter Scott, in one volume

in the *Canterbury Poets,* and also, in a single volume, by Crowell & Co. Herbert is the finest of the religious lyric poets of the seventeenth century.

Robert Herrick (1591–1674). *Poems.*

A fine selection, with an introduction by Thomas Bailey Aldrich, is published in one volume by the Century Co. Herrick is to be found also in the *Canterbury Poets,* in one volume, and in *Morley's Universal Library,* published by George Rutledge & Sons.

Thomas Heywood (158?–164?). *Dramatic Works.*

In the *Mermaid Series.*

Oliver Wendell Holmes (1809–94). *Complete Poetical Works.*

In the Cambridge Edition.

Homer. *The Iliad. The Odyssey.*

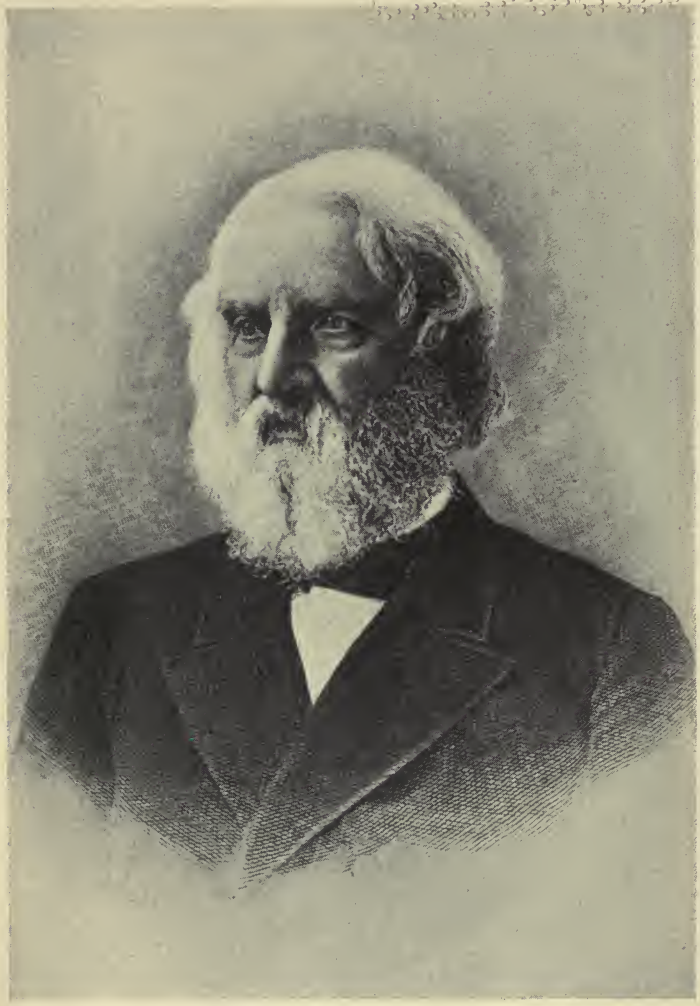
See pages 211–12 of this Guide.

Thomas Hood (1799–1845). *Poems.*

Hood's humorous poems are found in a pleasantly illustrated volume, published by Macmillan. His serious poems, "Eugene Aram," "The Bridge of Sighs," "The Song of the Shirt," are well known, and are in many anthologies.

Horace. *Odes, Epodes, Satires, and Epistles.*

Selected translations from the best English poets and scholars in one volume of the *Chandos Classics,* published by Frederick Warne & Co.



LONGFELLOW

Ben Jonson (1573–1637). *Plays.*

In the *Mermaid Series.* Jonson's fine lyrics, including the perfect song "Drink to Me Only with Thine Eyes," should be looked for in the anthologies.

John Keats (1795–1821). *Poems.*

The best edition of Keats is that edited by Buxton Forman. Good editions are those in *Everyman's Library* and in the *Golden Treasury Series.*

Rudyard Kipling. *Barrack-Room Ballads. The Seven Seas.*

Sidney Lanier (1842–81). *Poems.*

In one volume, published by Scribner. An inspired poet, if ever one was born in America.

Walter Savage Landor (1775–1864). *Poems, Imaginary Conversations, etc.*

A volume of selections from the prose and verse of Landor is to be found in the *Golden Treasury Series.*

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807–82). *Complete Poetical Works.*

In the Cambridge Edition. A good selection from Longfellow appears in the *Golden Treasury Series.*

James Russell Lowell (1819–91). *Complete Poetical Works.*

In the Cambridge Edition.

Maurice Maeterlinck. *Plays.*

Translated by Richard Hovey.

Christopher Marlowe (1564–93). *Plays.*

In the *Mermaid Series.*

George Meredith (1828–1909). *Poems.*

Published in one volume by Scribner. Meredith's poems of nature should be read first.

John Milton (1608–74). *Complete Poetical Works.*

In the Cambridge Edition and also in the Globe Edition. There are many texts of Milton prepared for use in schools. The young reader will be fortunate if he can read and enjoy the shorter poems and two or three books of "Paradise Lost," before he comes to the study of them in school.

Molière (Jean Baptiste Poquelin, 1622–73). *Dramatic Works.*

There are many English versions of Molière, some prepared for the stage. The edition in three volumes in *Bohn's Library* is practically complete.

Thomas Moore (1779–1852). *Irish Melodies.*

The complete poems of Moore are published in an inexpensive volume by T. Y. Crowell & Co. Moore's songs are his best work and many of them retain a sure place in the popular balladry of our race.

William Morris (1834–96). *The Defence of Guinevere. Life and Death of Jason.*

The great fluency of Morris's poetry makes his longer narratives remarkably easy to read. Although he is a poet known and cherished by the few, his

stories in verse are singularly well adapted to young readers.

Edgar Allan Poe (1809–49). *Complete Poetical Works.*

The best edition is that edited by Stedman and Woodberry. There are several other single-volume editions. The dozen best poems of Poe should be known to every young American, and Mr. Andrew Lang is right in saying (preface to the "Blue Poetry Book") that the youngest ear will be delighted by the beauty of the words.

Alexander Pope (1688–1744). *Complete Poetical Works.*

In the Cambridge Edition. A century that began with Keats and Shelley and ended with Swinburne and Meredith does not accord Pope the high place he enjoyed in his own century, but places him at best among the most brilliant of the comic poets. The "Rape of the Lock" is a humorous masterpiece. A surprisingly good anthology of Pope is the section given to him in Bartlett's "Familiar Quotations"; the large number of lines from his work is sure proof of his place in our literature; only Shakespeare, Milton, and the Bible contribute so much that is "familiar."

James Whitcomb Riley. *Old-Fashioned Roses.*

A natural and joyous singer about common things, deservedly popular in America and a truer poet than many critics suspect.

Christina Georgina Rossetti (1830–94). *Poems.*

Published in one volume by Little, Brown & Co. Among English women only Mrs. Browning is so fine a poet as Christina Rossetti.

Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828–82). *Complete Poetical Works.*

In two volumes, published by Little, Brown & Co. The young reader should begin with Rossetti's songs, ballads, and simpler poems, "The Blessed Damosel" and "My Sister's Sleep." The sonnet sequence, "The House of Life," is for mature readers.

Johann Christoph Friedrich von Schiller (1759–1805). *Dramatic Works and Poems.*

In several volumes of *Bohn's Library,* translated by Coleridge and others.

Walter Scott (1771–1832). *Complete Poetical Works.*

In the Cambridge Edition. Scott's narrative poems are preëminently adapted to the taste and understanding of young readers. There are many school editions of Scott's poetry, and innumerable reprints attest his continued popularity.

William Shakespeare.

The best one-volume edition of Shakespeare is the Cambridge Edition. The best edition in many volumes is the Cambridge Shakespeare, published by Macmillan & Co. It gives the readings of the Elizabethan texts so that the reader can distinguish (and

accept or reject) the emendations of scholars. A pocket edition such as the Temple (Macmillan), or the Ariel (Putnam), will prove a good friend.

Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792–1822). *Complete Poetical Works.*

In the Cambridge Edition or the Globe. In two volumes in *Everyman's Library.* Selected poems in the *Golden Treasury Series.*

Philip Sidney (1554–86). *Lyric Poems.*

In a small attractive volume, published by Macmillan.

Sophocles (495–406 B.C.) *Plays.*

In the English translation of R. C. Jebb. The volume in *Everyman's Library* contains translations by Young. Professor G. H. Palmer's "Antigone" is as remarkable as his "Odyssey."

Robert Southey (1774–1843). *Poems.*

Selected poems in the *Golden Treasury Series.*

Edmund Spenser (1552–99). *Complete Poems.*

In the Globe Edition. Called the poet's poet; a source of inspiration to other poets. If we do not read "The Faerie Queene" at length, it is because we have so many poets since Spenser. Yet if the reader had only Spenser he would have an inexhaustible river of English poetry.

Robert Louis Stevenson (1849–94). *A Child's Garden of Verses.*

Published by Scribner, in one volume, which contains Stevenson's other verse. "The Child's Garden" celebrates childhood in a way that touches the grown imagination, like the poems about children by Blake, Swinburne, and Francis Thompson, but it appeals also to children of all ages.

Algernon Charles Swinburne (1837–1909). *Selected Poems.*

Edited by R. H. Stoddard and published by Crowell. The young reader should approach Swinburne first in "Atalanta," poems about children, poems about other poets, and poems of liberty, notably "The Litany of Nations." He is a noble poet, frequently misrepresented by friendly and unfriendly wafters of current literary opinion.

John B. Tabb. *Poems.*

In two or three small volumes, published by Small, Maynard & Co. The purest note among living American poets.

Alfred Tennyson (1809–92). *Poetic and Dramatic Works.*

Complete in one volume in the Cambridge Edition and also in the Globe.

Of all modern poets preëminently the one for young and old readers to know entire (with the possible exception of his dramas).

Theocritus. *Idylls.*

In English prose, together with translations from Bion and Moschus, by Andrew Lang, in the *Golden*

Treasury Series. Theocritus is translated into excellent English verse by the poet, C. S. Calverley.

James Thomson (1700–48). *The Castle of Indolence. The Seasons.*

Dimmed but not displaced by later poets of nature. Thomson may be read first in the anthologies, from which now and again a sincere admirer will be sent to his complete works.

James Thomson (1834–82). *The City of Dreadful Night.*

A remarkable poet, easily among those whom we think of as next to the greatest poets. Professor William James calls "The City of Dreadful Night" "that pathetic book," "which I think is less well known than it should be for its literary beauty, simply because men are afraid to quote its words—they are so gloomy, and at the same time so sincere."

Francis Thompson (1859–1907). *The Hound of Heaven.*

This poet, lately dead, has surely taken his place among the true voices of English poetry.

Henry Vaughan (1622–95). *Poems.*

In the Aldine Edition (Macmillan).

Vergil (70–19 B.C.). *Eclogues. Georgics. Æneid.*

In Conington's prose translation. The poetic version of William Morris is spirited and fluent.

John Webster (lived in the Elizabethan age). *Dramas.*

In the *Mermaid Series.*

WALT WHITMAN (1819–92). *Leaves of Grass.*

Whitman's poetry is complete in one volume, published by Small, Maynard & Co. The most powerful of American poets. The young reader should begin with the patriotic pieces and the poems of nature in the sections entitled "Sea-Drift," "By the Roadside," "Drum Taps," "Memories of President Lincoln," "Whispers of Heavenly Death."

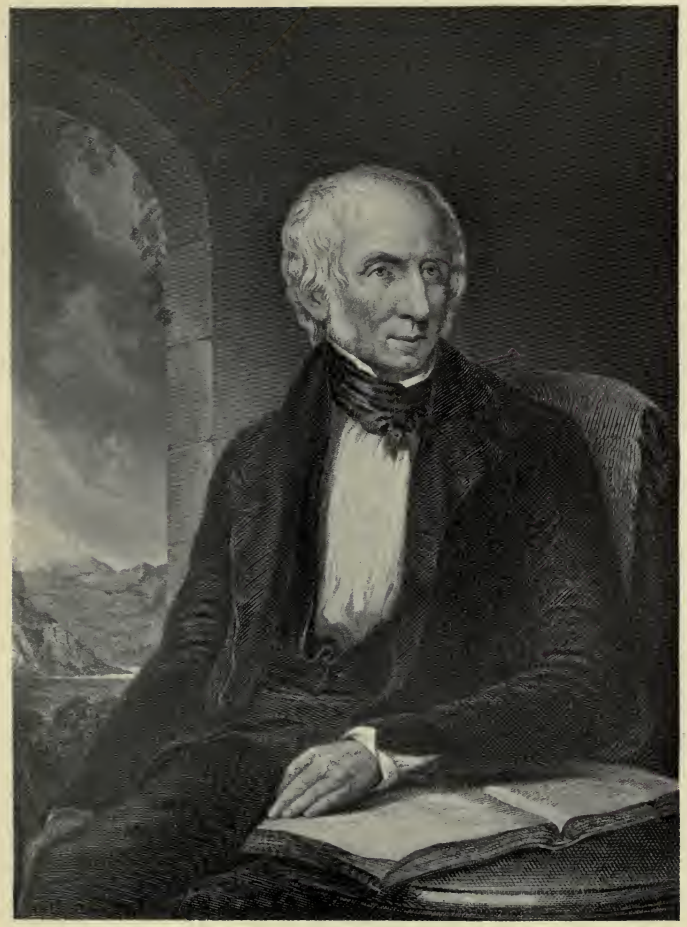
JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER (1807–92). *Complete Poetical Works.*

In the Cambridge Edition. Widely loved in America for his popular ballads and songs of common things. In his poems of liberty and in poems of religious sympathy and faith, the true passion of the poet overcomes the technical limitations of his verse and results in pure poetry.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH (1770–1850). *Complete Poetical Works.*

In the Globe Edition. The true Wordsworthian believes with Robert Southey that "a greater poet than Wordsworth there never has been nor ever will be." A serene voice that swelled increasingly through a troubled century, and is more and more felt to have uttered the essential ideas needed in these hundred years. Yet much of Wordsworth is less than poetic, and the new reader should seek him first in the selections edited by Matthew Arnold in the *Golden Treasury Series.*

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



WORDSWORTH

CHAPTER VII

THE READING OF HISTORY

THE plays of Shakespeare which are based upon the chronicles of English kings are grouped in the Folio edition of the dramatic works as "Histories." It will not surprise any reader, who happens not to have thought of it before, to learn that the episodes in "Henry IV" and "Henry V" do not follow the actual course of events in the reigns of the real kings; we take it for granted that Shakespeare meant to write historical fiction, and we read the plays as creations of the poetic imagination. But many readers will be surprised to hear that most works which we call historic are likewise figments of the imagination, and that we should read many of them in somewhat the same spirit as we read the historical plays of Shakespeare or good historical novels. Not only do we get the most pleasure out of the great historians by regarding their works as pieces of artistic writing, but we save ourselves from the error of accepting their narratives as fact. For it is generally true that the more glowing, the more imaginative, the more architectural a work of history, the more it is open to suspicion that it is not an exact account of true events. In taking

this position we are not appropriating to the uses of literary enjoyment works of information that should be left among the dictionaries and encyclopedias; we are only obeying the best critical historians, who warn us not to believe the accepted masterpieces of history, but allow us to enjoy them. And enjoyment is what we seek and value.

The conception of history as the work of the imagination was held by all the older historians. Bacon said that poetry is "feigned history." That is, he conceived that the methods of poetry and history are the same and that the difference lies in the material, the poet inventing the substance of his story, the historian finding his substance in the recorded events of the past. This view of history obtained up to the nineteenth century. Macaulay said that history is a compound of poetry and philosophy. And Carlyle thought it proper to designate as a history his "French Revolution," a work based on certain facts in history but consisting in large part of dramatic fiction, philosophic reflection, and political argument. In the last hundred years there has grown up a view of history as a science, the purpose of which is to examine the evidences of the past in human life as the geologist studies the past of the physical globe on which we live. The new school of history is comparatively so young that it has not produced many writers of high rank in eloquence and literary power, whereas poetic history is as old as literature and includes the work of many great masters. These masters live by their eloquence;

for it is eloquence rather than mere truth to fact that gives a work a permanent place in literature. So our knowledge of historic events must come to us, the world of general readers, in large part from historians who were great artists rather than accurate scholars. And scientific history, and also scientific biography, will for another century be a voice crying in the beautiful wilderness of legend, myth, philosophical opinion, political prejudice, and patriotic enthusiasm.

We can cheerfully leave this scientific history where it belongs, in the hands of historians and special students. The better for us as readers if we can read the great histories with the same delight and somewhat the same kind of interest that we bring to the reading of romances. There will be enough truth in them to give us a fairly just view of former ages. The culture and humanity will be there. Shakespeare's stories of English kings give us the spirit of England. Carlyle's "French Revolution" will never cease to be a splendid work of art. Bancroft's "History of the United States" will remain a noble celebration of democracy, even though he was not strict in his use of documents.

In school we expect to learn true lessons in history, to get our dates right and keep our judgments impartial. Out of school we shall read history for pleasure and like it the better if it is informed with the eloquence, the prejudice, the philosophy, in short the personality of a great writer.

There are certain books that occur immediately

as introductions to the various departments of literature. We agreed that Palgrave's "Golden Treasury" is the best book to put into the hands of one knocking for the first time at the door of poetry. Boswell's "Life of Johnson" is a perfect biography to win the new reader's liking for biographical literature and memoirs. And so there is one volume of history that seems the best of all books in which English speaking youth may read the great story of the race, Green's "Short History of the English People." One might wish from patriotic motives that there were an American history equally good, but there is none, so far as I know—none which covers our national life as a whole. We can, however, be content with Green, for the American cannot know his own history or his own literature and traditions without knowing those of England. Our literature is English literature and must be for centuries to come, and in most of our reading of poetry and fiction we shall find that the history of England is involved more deeply than the history of our country.

The merits of Green's History, the literary merits, are its clear arrangements, the fine lucidity of the writing, its condensation of national movements into rich chapters where, as from a peak one overlooks the great epochs of disaster and progress. These are the opening sentences:

"For the fatherland of the English race we must look far away from England itself. In the fifth century after the birth of Christ, the one country

which we know to have borne the name of Angeln or the Engleland lay in the district which we now call Sleswick, a district in the heart of the peninsula which parts the Baltic from the northern seas. Its pleasant pastures, its black-timbered homesteads, its prim little townships, looking down on inlets of purple water, were then but a wild waste of heather and sand, girt along the coast with sunless woodland, broken here and there by meadows which crept down to the marshes and the sea."

Could any historic novel, we may say could any *other* historic romance, open more enticingly? Here is rich promise, promise of the picturesque, promise of the eloquent phrase, promise of a sympathetic history of a people who are delvers in the soil, dwellers in homesteads, and no mere pawns in the game of kings. This is to be a history of a people. We shall learn of their great common characteristics; we shall understand them as we understand a family, and every adventure from King Alfred's burning of the cakes to Clive's conquest of India will spring like the episodes in a great plot from the character of the English race.

From Green's History, as a whole, we shall learn what are the important things in the history of any people. His admirable sense of the relative values of events and persons informs his work with a philosophy of life that is just, wholesome, and salutary for a young person to be imbued with who must look out on the daily struggle about him, read the endless hodge-podge of newspaper chronicle, and

weigh the day's events wisely. Green fulfils the ideal which he sets forth in the preface: "It is the reproach of historians that they have too often turned history into a mere record of the butchery of men by their fellow men. But war plays a small part in the real history of European nations, and in that of England its part is smaller than in any. . . . If I have said little of the glories of Cressy, it is because I have dwelt much on the wrong and misery which prompted the verse of Longland and the preaching of Ball. But on the other hand, I have never shrunk from telling at length of the triumphs of peace. I have restored to their place among the achievements of Englishmen the 'Faerie Queene' and the 'Novum Organum.' I have set Shakespeare among the heroes of the Elizabethan age. . . . I have had to find a place for figures little heeded in common history—the figures of the missionary, the poet, the printer, the merchant, the philosopher."

One of the practical merits of Green's England as an introduction to the reading of historic literature is that at the head of each chapter he gives the works from which he has drawn. And as his nature and ideals of history led him to the most fertile and interesting of other historians, his lists contain the titles of readable books rather than dry and obscure sources. So that if a reader finds one part of the story of England especially fascinating he can turn aside to those historians who have treated it more fully, to the authorities whom Green read and enjoyed. For instance, see the wealth of books

which Green mentions at the head of the chapter that most concerns us, The Independence of America. There are Lord Stanhope's "History of England from the Peace of Utrecht," Bancroft's "History of the United States," Massey's "History of England from the Accession of George the Third," Lecky's "History of England in the Eighteenth Century"; the letters and memoirs of individuals who witnessed the struggle, or took part in it, such as the "Letters" of Junius, "Life and Correspondence of Charles James Fox," Burke's speeches and pamphlets. And we should add the newest important authority on the conflict, Trevelyan's "American Revolution."

These books in turn will lead to others as far as the reader cares to go. Indeed it is one of the delights and excitements of reading that one book suggests another, and the eager reader, who is under no obligation to go along a definite course, finds himself in a glorious tangle of bypaths. A book like Green's may lead into any corner of literature; one may follow, as it were, over the intellectual ground where he got his education. We may begin with Gibbon's "Rome" which he read at sixteen (other boys of sixteen can read it with as much pleasure as he found in it, even if they do not become historians), and we can go on through his early studies of the English church. If one reads only the poets and men of letters to whom he gives a place in his chronicle of English life one will be, before one knows it, a cultivated man—even a learned man.

Let us dwell a moment on this aspect of leadership in books. No two persons will ever follow the same course of reading; no list will prove good for everybody; but any book which has interested you, and which you have reason to think the product of a great mind, will constitute itself a guide to reading; [1] it will throw out a hundred clues, far-leading and profitable to take up, clues which show what has been the reading of the author whose work suggests them. And there must always be safety in following where a great man has gone in his literary pilgrimages.

If there is no history of America comparable in scope and style to Green's "Short History of the English People," there are several American historians of high rank. Perhaps because they were endowed with dramatic imagination, or were influenced by the literary rather than the scientific masterpieces of history, American historians of genius have applied their talents to romantic periods in the story of foreign nations, or to those early navigations and settlements which resulted in the founding of our nation. Washington Irving began in his "Life of Columbus" and "The Conquest of Granada" the brilliant stories of Spanish chivalry and adventure, which were continued by William Hickling Prescott in "The History of the Reign of Ferdinand and Isabella," "The Conquest of Mexico" and "The Conquest of Peru." The writings of Prescott and Irving have a kind of antique gor-

[1] See also page 244 of this Guide.

geousness in which the modern historian does not allow himself to indulge. The history of the French and the Indians and the pioneers appealed to the genius of Francis Parkman. The beginner may settle down to any book of Parkman's with the happy certainty of finding a brilliant and thrilling story. John Lothrop Motley, in "The Rise of the Dutch Republic" and "The United Netherlands," treats of a people whose story the American reader may learn in youth or may postpone until after he has become acquainted with some books on English and American history. The colonial history of America is best read in the work of John Fiske, whose gifts of style and philosophic outlook on life place him among the great historians. The history of America from the beginning to modern times must be read in books by various authors, who deal with limited sections and periods. It is especially true of recent periods that no one historian is adequate. Partisanship and our closeness to the Civil War have prevented the American historian from seeing the conflict clearly in its relations to the rest of our national story, and for a just impression of the struggle between the states, the reader should go to the documents and the memoirs of the time. The reminiscences of the political leaders, the biography of Lincoln, and the excellent narratives of Union and Confederate generals—Grant, Alexander, Longstreet, Gordon, Sherman, Sheridan, and others —constitute a history of the period. There is peculiar validity in the reminiscences of the contemporary

witnesses of historical events. The writer of autobiography and memoirs is not expected to give final judgments, and we unconsciously allow for his personal limitation. The professional historian, on the other hand, is obliged to make sweeping decisions, and we are likely too often to accept his decisions as final, unless we are trained and critical students of history. If one reads several memoirs of the same period, one gradually forms an historical judgment about it and comes to a position midway between the points of view of the various writers.

The young man beginning to read history now, as Green began Gibbon at sixteen, may consider whether he will devote himself to the task of writing the history of the American people. Even if his ambitions are not so high, he may be sure that as a citizen of the Republic he can never know too much about the history of his nation and of the men who helped to make it.

As aids to historical reading, it is well to have some books of bare facts, a short history of America, a dictionary of dates, and a compact general encyclopedia of events, such as Ploetz's "Epitome." But these are for reference and not for entertainment. As a rule, text books of history prepared for schools, however excellent they may be for the purposes of study, are not entertaining to read. They have not space for all the elaborate plots, political intrigues, biographical interludes, accounts of popular movements of thought, which appeal to the imagination of the leisurely reader. Our school

teachers will take care that we learn the salient facts which everyone must know. By ourselves we shall dip into Parkman's "Montcalm and Wolfe" or Prescott's "Conquest of Mexico" or Carlyle's "French Revolution." In reading these masterpieces for pleasure, we shall be supplementing our work in school and making our daily lessons easier.

LIST OF WORKS OF HISTORY

Supplementary to Chapter VII

The following list of titles is not intended to outline an adequate reference library for the student of history. It includes principally books that have taken their place in literature by virtue of their readability and their imaginative power, and may therefore be supposed to interest the general reader. A few books are included which deal with current historical problems and politics.

AMERICAN HISTORY

HENRY ADAMS. *History of the United States.*

Covers exhaustively the period immediately following the Revolution.

GEORGE BANCROFT (1800–91). *History of the United States from the Discovery of the Continent to 1789.*

JAMES BRYCE. *The American Commonwealth.*

The recognized authority on American political institutions.

Edward Channing. *Students' History of the United States.*

Said to be the best of the one-volume histories of this country.

John Fiske (1842–1901). *Discovery of America, with Some Account of Ancient America and the Spanish Conquest. New France and New England. Old Virginia and Her Neighbors. The Beginnings of New England. The Puritan Theocracy in its Relations to Civil and Religious Liberty. Dutch and Quaker Colonies in America. American Revolution. Critical Period of American History (1783–89). War of Independence. Mississippi Valley in the Civil War. Civil Government in the United States.*

John Brown Gordon. *Reminiscences of the Civil War.*

Albert Bushnell Hart (and collaborators). *American History Told by Contemporaries.*

Four volumes of extracts from diaries and writers who lived in the epochs under consideration. A rich source of information and enjoyment, as are also the following books:

How Our Grandfathers Lived. Colonial Children. Camps and Firesides of the Revolution. Romance of the Civil War.

William Edward Hartpole Lecky. *American Revolution.*

Selected from his "History of England in the Eighteenth Century." This with Trevelyan's "American Revolution" will give American readers the history of the conflict from a British point of view.

James Longstreet. *From Manassas to Appomattox.*

To be read in conjunction with the Memoirs by Grant, Porter, Sherman, Gordon, Alexander, and other Union and Confederate generals.

Francis Parkman (1823–93). *The Oregon Trail. France and England in North America.*

"France and England in North America" is divided into seven parts under the following titles:

Pioneers of France in the New World; The Jesuits in North America in the Seventeenth Century; La Salle and the Discovery of the Great West; The Old Régime in Canada; Count Frontenac and New France under Louis XIV; A Half Century of Conflict; Montcalm and Wolfe.

James Ford Rhodes. *History of the United States from the Compromise of 1850.*

Theodore Roosevelt. *American Ideals. The Naval War of 1812. The Winning of the West.*

Ellen Churchill Semple. *American History and Its Geographic Conditions.*

Goldwin Smith. *Canada and the Canadian Question. The United States, an Outline of Political History.*

George Otto Trevelyan. *American Revolution.*

Woodrow Wilson. *Congressional Government: a Study in American Politics. History of the American People.*

The second work, in five volumes, covers the history of the country from the beginnings to the present time; both readable and trustworthy.

GREAT BRITAIN

Francis Bacon (1561–1626). *History of the Reign of Henry VII.*

The first great piece of critical history in our language.

Henry Thomas Buckle. *History of Civilization in England.*

Thomas Carlyle (1795–1881). *Cromwell's Letters and Speeches, with Elucidations.*

Earl of Clarendon (1608–74). *History of the Great Rebellion.*

A vivid account of the Cromwellian wars by a royalist. Interesting to read in connection with Carlyle's "Elucidations" of the letters and speeches of Cromwell.

Mandell Creighton. *Age of Elizabeth.*

Edward Augustus Freeman (1823–92). *History of the Norman Conquest. William the Conquerer. Growth of the English Constitution from the Earliest Times.*

James Anthony Froude (1818–94). *History of England from the Fall of Wolsey to the Defeat of the Armada.*

Samuel Rawson Gardiner. *A Student's History of England. History of England from the Accession of James to the Outbreak of the Civil War. History of the Great Civil War. History of the Commonwealth and the Protectorate.*

The three histories last named constitute a continuous work of eighteen volumes. Gardiner is not the easiest historian to read, but his work is indispensable to anyone who would get a true view of a period which more than any other in English history has been discolored by brilliant biased historians, from Clarendon to Carlyle and Macaulay.

John Richard Green (1837–83). *A Short History of the English People. The Making of England. The Conquest of England. A History of the English People.*

The "History" is a longer, though, perhaps, not a "greater," book than the "Short History."

Richard Hakluyt (1553–1616). *The Principal Navigations, Voyages and Discoveries of the English Nation.*

In eight volumes of *Everyman's Library.*

Henry Hallam (1777–1859). *Constitutional History of England.*

David Hume (1711–76). *History of England.*

Almost displaced as a historian by later writers, but still interesting because of his philosophic and literary genius.

Andrew Lang. *History of Scotland.*

William Edward Hartpole Lecky. *History of England in the Eighteenth Century.*

Thomas Babington Macaulay (1800–59). *History of England from James II.*

In three volumes in *Everyman's Library.*

Goldwin Smith. *The United Kingdom.*

Jacques Nicolas Augustin Thierry. *History of the Norman Conquest of England.*

In *Everyman's Library.*

FRANCE

Edmund Burke (1729–97). *Reflections on the Revolution in France.*

Thomas Carlyle (1795–1881). *The French Revolution.*

Victor Duruy. *History of France.*

English translation, published by Crowell & Co.

François Pierre Guillaume Guizot. *History of France from the Earliest Times to 1848.*

Victor Hugo. *History of a Crime.*

Deals with the Coup d'état of 1851, of which Hugo

was a witness. Vivid, powerful writing, easy to read in the French.

Henry Morse Stephens. *History of the French Revolution.*

The work of a modern scientific historian, may be read after Carlyle's "French Revolution" as a corrective and for the sake of comparing two historical methods.

Hippolyte Adolphe Taine. *The Ancient Régime. The French Revolution. The Modern Régime.*

The application to French history of somewhat the same philosophic methods and principles that inform his "History of English Literature."

GERMANY

Samuel Rawson Gardiner. *The Thirty Years' War.*

Ernest Flagg Henderson. *A Short History of Germany.*

Helmuth Karl Bernhard von Moltke. *The Franco-German War.*

ANCIENT GREECE

Alfred John Church. *Pictures from Greek Life and Story.*

Especially adapted to young readers.

Ernst Curtius. *History of Greece.*

A monumental German work to be found in a readable translation.

Thomas Davidson. *Education of the Greek People and its Influence on Civilization.*

George Finlay. *Greece Under the Romans.*

In *Everyman's Library.*

George Grote. *History of Greece.*

The standard English work in Greek history. In twelve volumes of *Everyman's Library.*

Herodotus. *Stories of the East from Herodotus.*

Extracts retold by Alfred John Church, especially for young readers.

John Pentland Mahaffy. *Greek Life and Thought from the Age of Alexander to the Roman Conquest. A Survey of Greek Civilization.*

ANCIENT ROME

Samuel Dill. *Roman Society in the Last Century of the Western Empire.*

Edward Gibbon (1737–94). *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.*

The supreme contribution of England to historical literature, in its combination of distinguished style and scientific method.

THEODOR MOMMSEN. *History of Rome.*

A great German work, in five volumes, to be found in a readable English translation.

OTHER HISTORIES

Cambridge Modern History.

Of this great History planned by the late Lord Acton, ten volumes have been published. It is the work of many writers and will be a storehouse of the most competent historical writing of our time.

JAMES BRYCE. *Holy Roman Empire.*

Readers of Bryce's "American Commonwealth" will seek this other excellent work.

JEAN FROISSART. *Chronicles.*

In *Everyman's Library.*

There are several translations and condensations of Froissart's "Chronicles," notably "The Boy's Froissart," edited by the American poet, Sidney Lanier.

MARY HENRIETTA KINGSLEY. *The Story of West Africa.*

HENRY HART MILMAN (1791–1868). *History of Latin Christianity.*

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON. *A Footnote to History: Eight Years of Trouble in Samoa.*

A fine piece of historical writing showing that Stevenson had the gifts of the historian as well as the gifts of the poet and romancer.

William Hickling Prescott (1796–1859). *Conquest of Mexico. Conquest of Peru. Reign of Philip Second. Reign of Ferdinand and Isabella.*

John Lothrop Motley (1814–77). *Rise of the Dutch Republic. History of the United Netherlands.*

Archibald Forbes. *The Afghan Wars.*

A mixture of history and vivid reporting by a great war correspondent.

Pierre Loti. *Last Days of Pekin.*

Washington Irving (1783–1859). *Knickerbocker's History of New York. The Conquest of Granada.*

These books demonstrate the wide range of Irving's genius from burlesque, mingled with genuine study of racial characteristics, to sober and poetic history.

François Marie Arouet (Voltaire). *History of Charles XII of Sweden.*

Accompanied in the English translation by the critical essays of Macaulay and Carlyle. Easy to read in the French.

John Addington Symonds (1840–93). *Renaissance in Italy.*

A work of rare beauty on the men, the history, and the art of Italy.

Walter Raleigh (1552–1618). *The Discovery of the Empire of Guiana. A History of the World.*

Raleigh's "History of the World" is not so large as it sounds in scope, but in imagination it almost lives up to its title. Thoreau says: "He is remarkable in the midst of so many masters. There is a natural emphasis in his style, like a man's tread, and a breathing space between his sentences."

Frederic Harrison. *The Meaning of History.*

An excellent guide to the reading of history.

CHAPTER VIII

THE READING OF BIOGRAPHY

SINCE literature is, broadly, the written record of human life, biography, the life story of real men, lies at the core and center of literature. On one side biography is allied to history, which is the collective biography of many men. On the other side it is related to fiction.

In our discussion of "History" we found that there are two ideals or methods of writing it: one the picturesque, the other the scientific. The scientific historian accuses the picturesque historian of falsifications and disproportions. Scientific history is new and aggressive and it accentuates its differences from the old ideals. Yet there is no essential opposition between fact and an imaginative representation of fact. Gibbon is picturesque, yet he is one of the first great historians to make exhaustive study and accurate use of documents. Carlyle can be as eloquent when he is telling the truth as when he is misled by his love of color and his partisan passions. The great historian of the future will not falsify or distort facts except as human nature must always intervene before the facts which it presents in human language. The true historian will have

great imagination, great vision, and yet have scrupulous care to precisions of truth. For the present, history is recovering from its traditional eloquence and trying to learn to present facts honestly and clearly. Never again will the spirit of history and historical criticism tolerate such a magnificent fabrication as the end of De Quincey's "Flight of a Tartar Tribe," in which he gives, with all the paraphernalia of a learned note, the inscription carved on the columns of granite and brass to commemorate the migration of the Kalmucks. The columns are a structure of De Quincey's fancy, and the inscription is in such prose as he alone among white men or Chinamen knew how to write! In De Quincey's time it was not considered an ethical aberration to invent facts. In a ponderous article which he wrote for the *Encyclopædia Britannica* on Shakespeare, he quoted the poet from memory and spun some of the biography from his own fancy. The pious and learned President of Harvard College, Jared Sparks, for the greater glory of America and its founder, "improved" the style of Washington's private papers and ably defended the emendations. And Weems, an early biographer of the man who seems nobler the more truly we know him and who needs no legend to dignify him, wrote his life of Washington with the deliberate purpose, indicated on the title page, of inculcating patriotic and moral lessons in the young. Hence the cherry-tree story.

History has improved in its morals, if not in its manners, and scientific biography is making some

headway. But biography is still in a hazy state of legend and myth. Approach any man you choose, especially among men of letters who have been written about by other men of letters, and you find a mass of conjecture and legend masquerading as fact. Sometimes there is an added garment of disguise, the dignified gown of science and scholarship.

No great writer has suffered from credulous and weak-principled biographers so much as the greatest of all—Shakespeare. Most of the lives of him are gigantic myths, built on hardly as many known facts as would fill two pages of this book. Of late historians and men of science have begun to laugh at literary biographers for making such confusion of the institution of Shakespeare biography. It is well enough for the young reader to learn carefully the biographical notes prefixed to the school editions of Shakespeare, for the better the young reader learns school exercises and the notes in the text books, the better basis he has for reading and thinking for himself. I may say, however, that there are at present, so far as I know, only two books on the life of Shakespeare which are trustworthy, Halliwell-Phillips's "Outlines," which gives all the documents, and a recent masterly discussion of the documents by George G. Greenwood called "The Shakespeare Problem Restated." It is a problem and not one for us to go into here except that it illustrates what we are saying about scientific and fanciful biography. I should not wonder if another generation were more interested than our fathers have been in the poetic

achievements, whatever they are, of the man whose youthful portrait is on the cover of this book—Francis Bacon. One thing is certain: the rising generation had better learn early to approach with caution and tolerant scepticism books bearing such titles as "Shakespeare, Man, Player and Poet," "Shakespeare, His Life, His Mind and His Art." We had better bend our attentions to the plays themselves, and when we wish to read *about* Shakespeare, turn not to the so-called biographies and "studies in Shakespeare" by college professors, but to the great critics, Coleridge, Hazlitt, Lamb, De Quincey, Pater.

As we said that we, mere readers, should leave scientific history in the hands of specialists, so we may leave the problems of literary biography to expert investigators. We are interested rather in that kind of biography which is as old as the earliest legends of heroes, that which celebrates the great ones of the earth. If it is true to fact so much the better; but since biographers are likely to be the friends, kinsmen, admirers of their subjects, biography will be the last division of history to be informed with the scientific spirit. And so far as it is an art, it will err on the right side, like fiction and poetry, by presenting an ennobled view of human nature.

That biography is an art is proved by the admittedly great examples. The novelist who creates a fictitious biography has no more difficult and delicate task than the biographer who finds in a real life story the true character of a man, and gives to the events which produced the character artistic

form, unity, and movement. Boswell's "Life of Samuel Johnson" and Robert Southey's "Life of Lord Nelson" are as beautifully designed as the best novels. Boswell's masterpiece resembles a realistic novel and Southey's "Nelson" is like a romantic tale of chivalry and heroism.

Benjamin Jowett, the great professor of Greek at Oxford, said that biography is the best material for ethical teaching. In many ways it is the best material for all kinds of teaching. For everything that human beings have done and thought is to be found in the life stories of interesting individuals, so that biography opens the way to every subject. In our discussion of history we said that the directest path to the heart of an historical epoch is through the biography of an important figure or a wise observer of that epoch. There is no better political history of America during the Civil War than Nicolay and Hay's "Life of Lincoln." Grant's "Memoirs" contains all that an ordinary reader needs to know of the movements of the Northern armies after Grant took command. The memoirs and reminiscences of Davis and Confederate generals give us an adequate account of the civil and military movements of the Southern side. Carlyle's "Cromwell," no matter how biased and overwrought it seems to discriminating students, will open the seventeenth century for those of us who cannot be specialists in history. Bourrienne's "Memoirs of Napoleon," in the English translation, is a good introduction to the history of Europe during the Napoleonic wars

(and it makes little difference to us that the book was largely rewritten and augmented by the French editor). Morley's "Life of Gladstone" is a history of Victorian England. The life of Luther is the heart of the Protestant Reformation.

The layman who would know something of the tendencies of modern science cannot do better than to read the biographies of men of science in which sympathetic pupils have told in a style more simple than the masters' treatises the intellectual principles and human conditions of the masters' work. Such biographies are the "Life and Letters" of Darwin, of Huxley, of Agassiz. The "Life of Pasteur" by Valery-Radot, which has been translated into English, is a clear account of the main tendencies of modern medicine, the subject that all the world is so much interested in. Anyone who reads it will know better how to make his way through the masses of popular articles on medicine and public health in the current magazines.

Since literary men are the most interesting of all heroes to other makers of books, it is natural that the lives of the masters of literature should have been written in greater abundance and usually with greater skill and charm than the lives of any other class of men. A good way, perhaps the best way, to study literature is to read the lives of a dozen or a score of great writers. An ambitious youth, determined to lay the foundations of a knowledge of literature, might begin to read in any order the biographies in the series called *English Men of Letters.*

From that series I should cross out William Black's "Goldsmith" and substitute Forster's or Washington Irving's "Life of Goldsmith"; I should also omit Leslie Stephen's "George Eliot" and read instead the "Life and Letters" by J. W. Cross. It would be as well to pass by Mr. Henry James's "Hawthorne" in favor of the biography by Mr. George E. Woodberry in *American Men of Letters.*

It will not be wise even for the enthusiastic reader of literature to confine his reading in biography to the lives of men of letters. There is such a thing as being too much interested in bookish persons. Men of action have led more eventful lives than most writers, and their biographers are likely therefore to have more of a story to tell. Whenever you find yourself interested in any man, when some reference to him rouses your curiosity, read his biography. In general it is better to read about him in a complete "Life," even if it is a bulky one in a forbidding number of volumes. You are not obliged to read it all. It is better to roam for half an hour through Boswell than to read a short life of Johnson. This is a day of pellet books, handy volumes, and popular compendiums; we need to learn again the use and delight of a little reading in big books, in which we can dwell for long or short periods. We need, also, to get over the idea that only learned persons and special students can go to original documents. A boy of fifteen will have more fun turning over the state papers and letters and addresses of Washington and Jefferson and Lincoln than in read-

ing a short encyclopedia article on one of those great men. Just try it the next time you happen to be wandering aimlessly in a public library and see if you do not stumble on something interesting. The whole "Dictionary of National Biography" is not so much worth owning and, except for purposes of reference, not so much worth reading as half as many volumes of first-hand biography.

The first of all original documentary biography is autobiography. A man knows more about his own life than anyone else and he is quite as likely to tell the truth about it as his official biographer. "The Story of My Life" is always an attractive title, no matter who the hero is. If an autobiography has continued to find readers for a number of years, it is likely to be worth looking at. Sometimes men who are not entitled to be called great have written great autobiographies. The "Autobiography" of Joseph Jefferson is full of delightful humor and sweetness. At a time when the theater is not an institution of which we are proud and actors as they appear in the public prints are usually bores and vulgarians, Jefferson's "Autobiography" will give the reader a new sense of the potential dignity of the stage and of the humanity of the actor's profession. Among the great men who have written autobiographies we have mentioned Mill and Franklin and Grant. Others who have written delightful volumes of self-portraiture are Goethe, Gibbon, Trollope, Mrs. Oliphant. As a working rule, I should suggest that when you are interested in a

man, you should first read his autobiography if he wrote one. If he did not, turn to the most complete story of his life, the one that contains whatever letters and documents have survived. And as a third choice try to find a life of him by some writer who was intimate with him during his life, or who is an expert in the subject to which his life was devoted, or who is a master in the art of biography.

LIST OF BIOGRAPHIES

Supplementary to Chapter VIII

This list of biographies does not constitute a catalogue of great men. It merely gives some biographies that have literary quality or some other quality that makes them important. The subject of the biography is given first whenever the person written about would naturally come into the mind before the author of the book; thus: Samuel Johnson; "Life" by James Boswell. In other cases the author comes first; thus: Plutarch; Lives.

John and Abigail Adams. *Familiar Letters of John Adams and His Wife, Abigail Adams, During the Revolution.*

Joseph Addison. *Life,* by William John Courthope.

In *English Men of Letters.*

Thomas Bailey Aldrich. *Life,* by Ferris Greenslet.

Alfred the Great. *Life,* by Walter Besant.

Henri Frédéric Amiel. *Journal,* translated by Mrs. Humphrey Ward.

Aurelius Augustinus. *Confessions of St. Augustine.*

A remarkable autobiography. Pusey's translation is in *Everyman's Library.*

Francis Bacon. *Life and Letters,* edited by James Spedding.

James Matthew Barrie. *Margaret Ogilvy.*

Barrie's life of his mother; a delicious book.

George Henry Borrow. *The Bible in Spain.*

The subtitle defines this interesting book: "The journeys, adventures, and imprisonments of an Englishman in an attempt to circulate the Scriptures in the peninsula." Readers of Borrow (see page 75 of this Guide) will be interested in his "Life and Letters," edited by William I. Knapp.

Robert Browning. *Life and Letters,* by Alexandra Leighton Orr.

James Bryce. *Studies in Contemporary Biography.*

Edmund Burke. *Life,* by John Morley.
In *English Men of Letters.*

Robert Burns. *Life,* by John Gibson Lockhart.

Julius Cæsar. *Life,* by James Anthony Froude.
Commentaries on the Gallic and Civil Wars.

Thomas Carlyle and Mrs. Carlyle. *Life and Letters,* by James Anthony Froude.

Thomas de Quincey. *Autobiographic Sketches. Confessions of an English Opium-Eater. Reminiscences of the Lake Poets.*

Charles Dickens. *Life,* by John Forster.

In the edition abridged and revised by the English novelist, the late George Gissing.

George Eliot. *Letters and Journals,* edited by John Walter Cross.

Ralph Waldo Emerson. *Life,* by Oliver Wendell Holmes.

In *American Men of Letters.* See also Emerson's letters to Carlyle and John Sterling.

Francis of Assisi. *Life,* by Paul Sabatier.

In the English translation.

Benjamin Franklin. *Autobiography.*

William Ewart Gladstone. *Life,* by John Morley.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. *Autobiography.*

Translated in *Bohn's Library.*

Oliver Goldsmith. *Life,* by Austin Dobson. See also the biographies by John Forster and Washington Irving.

Ulysses Simpson Grant. *Personal Memoirs. Life,* by Owen Wister (in the *Beacon Biographies*).

Thomas Gray. *Letters,* edited with a biographical sketch by Henry Milnor Rideout.

Alexander Hamilton. *Life,* by Henry Cabot Lodge.

In *American Statesmen.*

Nathaniel Hawthorne. *Hawthorne and His Circle,* by Julian Hawthorne. *Life,* by George Edward Woodberry (in *American Men of Letters*).

Oliver Wendell Holmes. *Life and Letters,* edited by John Torrey Morse, Jr.

Thomas Henry Huxley. *Life and Letters,* edited by Leonard Huxley.

Washington Irving. *Life and Letters,* edited by Pierre Munroe Irving. *Life,* by Charles Dudley Warner (in *American Men of Letters*).

Jeanne d'Arc. *Life,* by Francis Cabot Lowell. *Life,* by Andrew Lang. *Condemnation and Rehabilitation of Jeanne d'Arc,* by J. E. J. Quicherat (in the English translation).

Samuel Johnson. *Lives of the Poets,* selected by Matthew Arnold. *Life of Johnson,* by James Boswell (in two volumes in *Everyman's Library*).

John Keats. *Life,* by Sidney Colvin.

In *English Men of Letters.*

Charles Lamb. *Letters,* edited by Alfred Ainger.

Robert Edward Lee. *Life,* by Philip Alexander Bruce. *Life and Letters,* by John William Jones. *Recollections and Letters,* by R. E. Lee, Jr. *Life,* by Thomas Nelson Page.

Abraham Lincoln. *Life,* by John George Nicolay and John Hay. *A Short Life of Abraham Lincoln,* by John George Nicolay. *Lincoln, Master of Men,* by Alonzo Rothschild.

David Livingstone. *Last Journals in Central Africa. How I Found Livingstone,* by Henry Morton Stanley.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. *Life and Letters,* edited by Samuel Longfellow.

Thomas Babington Macaulay. *Life and Letters,* by George Otto Trevelyan.

John Stuart Mill. *Autobiography.*

John Milton. *Life,* by Mark Pattison.
In *English Men of Letters.*

Napoleon. *Life,* by John Gibson Lockhart. *Life,* by William Milligan Sloane. *Memoirs of L. A. F. de Bourrienne. Life,* by John Holland Rose.

Margaret Oliphant. *Autobiography and Letters.*

Charles William Chadwick Oman. *Seven Roman Statesmen of the Later Republic: the Gracchi, Sulla, Crassus, Cato, Pompey, Cæsar.*

Samuel Pepys. *Diary.*
Two volumes in *Everyman's Library.*

Plutarch. *Lives.*

In the Elizabethan translation by Thomas North, or the modern translation by Arthur Hugh Clough. An abridged edition of this is published for schools by Ginn & Co.

Jacob August Riis. *The Making of an American.*

Walter Scott. *Memoirs of the Life of Sir Walter Scott,* by John Gibson Lockhart.

There is an abridged edition of Lockhart, edited by J. M. Sloan.

William Shakespeare. *The Shakespeare Problem Restated,* by George G. Greenwood. *Outlines of the Life of Shakespeare,* by James Orchard Halliwell-Phillips.

At the present time the most reliable works on Shakespeare's life.

William Tecumseh Sherman. *Memoirs. Home Letters of General Sherman,* edited by M. A. DeWolf Howe.

Robert Southey. *Life of Nelson.*

In *Everyman's Library.*

Anthony Trollope. *Autobiography.*

Izaak Walton. *Lives* of John Donne, George Herbert and Richard Hooker.

George Washington. *Life of Washington,* by Washington Irving. *The Seven Ages of Wash-*

ington, by Owen Wister. *Life,* by Woodrow Wilson.

JOHN WESLEY. *The Heart of Wesley's Journal,* with an essay by Augustine Birrell, published by Fleming-Revell Co.

The journal is found in four volumes of *Everyman's Library.*

CHAPTER IX

THE READING OF ESSAYS

ALL literature consists of the written opinions and ideas, the knowledge and experience, of individuals; it is a chorus of human voices. Often the individuality of the creative artist is lost in the magnitude of the work. It is present, necessarily, in every line, but in the highest forms of literature, epic and dramatic poetry, the personal lineaments are dissolved. Shakespeare, sincerest of poets, did not in his dramas reveal his heart or directly utter a single belief that we can feel sure was the private conviction of the author, and the attempts to associate lines from Shakespeare with the personal experiences of the actor of Stratford are invariably grotesque. Homor, who, according to Mr. Kipling, "smote his bloomin' lyre" and "winked back" at us, was no such living man; it is likely that even if there was a Homer, a poet who made the nucleus of "Iliad," many hands during several centuries produced the Greek epics, "The Iliad" and "The Odyssey," as we have them. Although Dante writes in the first person, his adventures in worlds beyond the earth are those of a disembodied spirit, a universal soul seeing visions in regions where he must

put off something of his personality before he can enter. In the places where his prejudices and local enmities creep into his immense epic of the heavens, his work is least poetic; it is precipitated from the ideal to a kind of ghostly guide book, and the voices of the angels and the winds of the under world for the moment become still.

The novelist at his best disappears from his work. There is no greater shock than when at the end of "The Newcomes," Thackeray abruptly wrenches us from the deathbed of Colonel Newcome and says that he, W. M. Thackeray, has just written a story and that it is now fading away into Fableland. A device of printing would save us from the shock; the epilogue ought to begin on a new page, and a large "Finis" should follow Colonel Newcome's death. The person who makes a work of art has the privilege of talking about himself in a preface; after that he must stand back and let the stage fill with characters.

Even in great art, however, we do feel the presence of a man and we are willing to let him step in front of his stage sometimes and talk in his own person. The best English novelists, Fielding, Thackeray, George Eliot, Meredith, are essayists for pages at a time, and most of us do not resent their intrusion. We like writers who use the capital I.

So we take peculiar delight in that kind of literature which is avowedly a talk, a monologue in which an author discourses, not through poetic forms, or through fiction in which other characters are the speakers, but directly to us as in a private letter or

a spoken lecture. This kind of discourse is called an essay. The man who talks may pretend to be something that he is not, and the essayist is often a writer of fiction portraying only one character. Such was Lamb when he pretended to be Elia; such was Swift in many of his pamphlets; such was the "Spectator," a multiple personality whose wig Addison and Steele and their friends could put on at will.

Whether it is a real or a fictitious person who addresses us through the essay, the form of the essay is the same, a direct communication from a "me" to a "you."

The essay may have for its subject anything under the sun. It may be a short biography with critical comment, as in Macaulay's essays on Addison, on Chatham, on Clive, and Carlyle's essays on Burns and Scott. Other essays by Macaulay and Carlyle are on a framework of historical narrative. Oliver Wendell Holmes invented an essay form all his own in "The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table," in which the opinions of the autocrat are linked together by a pleasant boarding-house romance. And he achieved an unusual triumph when he continued the form in other books, "The Poet at the Breakfast Table" and "The Professor at the Breakfast Table," and did not suffer the disaster that usually befalls a writer's effort to repeat a success.

Most of the written philosophy of the modern world is in the form of essays. In Emerson we have philosophy in short eloquent discourses, many of

them like sermons. Political arguments and orations, if they have literary quality, like those of Burke and Webster, properly come under the head of essay. And almost all of the important body of literature called criticism is in essay form.

To say that every kind of writing seems to be essay which is not something else is, like some other Hibernian statements, a short way of expressing the truth. To be an artistic essay, to be really worthy the name, a composition must have in it a living personality. Personality is the soul of the essay. We do not admit under the term, essay, broad as it is, the discourse which has only utility to recommend it. An article on "How Our Presidents are Elected" may be instructive, it may be more necessary to the education of the young citizen than Leigh Hunt's chat about stage-coaches. But Hunt's chat is an essay: the other is not. A present-day indication of the difference between the essay and the unliterary form of exposition is the habit of our magazines of classifying all prose pieces that tell us "how" and "what" as "special articles," whereas "essays"—the editors do not print essays if they can help it! If a modern writer has an idea that would make an essay he is tempted to disguise it under some more acceptable shape. But the editors would retort—and with justice—that they would gladly print essays if they could get good ones.

There is something frank and immediate in the appeal of an essay; the writer of it must be able to talk continuously well; he has no surprises of plot

to fall back on to wake the interest of an inattentive auditor; he stands before us on a bare platform with no stage lights or scenery to help him. When he succeeds, his reward is a kind of personal victory, he finds not only readers but friends. This is especially true of those essayists who discourse of "things in general," the true essayists, Charles Lamb, William Hazlitt, Leigh Hunt, Montaigne, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Robert Louis Stevenson, Oliver Goldsmith. The true essayist, like the Walrus in "Alice in Wonderland," advises us that the time has come

> To talk of many things:
> Of shoes—and ships—and sealing wax—
> Of cabbages—and kings—
> And why the sea is burning hot—
> And whether pigs have wings.

And he proceeds, subject to no obligation in the world except the great obligation never to be dull. The obligation upon the essayist not to be dull imposes a peculiar obligation upon the reader that he shall be keen-witted. A stupid person may be stirred to attention by a novel or a play, but no stupid person can enjoy an essay. Indeed a taste for essays is a pretty sure sign of a reader who appreciates the literary spirit in itself.

Just as the essay form is a kind of test of appreciation, so certain writers are touchstones by which the taste of the reader may be judged. One such touchstone is Charles Lamb, the prince of English essayists. Whoever likes Lamb with unfeigned enthusiasm

has passed the frontier of reading and is at home in the universe of books. The reader who hopes to care for the best in Lamb will not do well, I think, to begin with the most familiar of his essays "A Dissertation on Roast Pig"; certainly he will not stop with that, for it has not Elia's finest smile nor even his jolliest fooling. And of course it has not his wisdom and pathos. The young reader can in an hour read a half dozen of Lamb's essays, "Old China," "The Superannuated Man," "Dream Children," "Imperfect Sympathies," "The Sanity of True Genius" and "A Chapter on Ears," and get a taste of his sweet variety. Lamb is one of the easiest of writers to read entire. His attempts at fiction and even his verse may be disregarded. The true Lamb, the Lamb of the essays and the letters, which are as good as essays, can be contained in a couple of volumes of moderate size. The essays of Elia are printed in many cheap editions; I have seen a book seller's counter stacked high with copies at twenty-five cents. As late as 1864, the editor of the first complete edition of Lamb thought that the public at large knew him but little, though his fame and popularity had increased since his death. I believe that since 1864 his popularity has increased still more—those twenty-five cent editions seem to show that in his own phrase, he has become "endenizened" in the heart of the English-speaking nations.

Perhaps the beginner will be a little perplexed at first by the obscurity of Lamb's allusions to literature,

for though he says that he could "read almost anything," he has a special liking for the quaint, and half the books that he mentions will be unfamiliar to the modern reader. But any book that pleased him will be worth looking at, and there is so much of common humanity in him that one can pass over his obscure references and still understand and enjoy him. So that if I recommend as the best possible short guide to literature his "Detached Thoughts on Books and Reading," I do not forget that the beginner will not recognize all the book titles and authors that Lamb touches with affectionate familiarity. Yet the thoughts are clear enough and have more of the true spirit of reading packed into them than is to be found in many a thick volume of literary criticism. The essays that touch the heart of the simplest reader, such as "Dream Children," may be read first, and they will lead to the literary essays, which are the best of all criticisms in the English language. Knowledge of Lamb is knowledge of literature. He opens the way not only to the choicest old books, but to the finest of his contemporaries. No man knew better than he the value of those friends of his whom we have set high in literature; he measured their altitude while they were swinging into place among the poetic stars.

As the chief master of literary ceremonies of his time, Lamb will be found at his best not only in his essays but in his letters. His essays have the informality of letters, and his letters have much of the

choiceness of phrase, the original turn of thought that distinguish his essays. In his friendly letters you can meet almost everybody worth knowing in that great period of English literature. Lamb is among the fine few whose correspondence is a work of literary art.

The literature of private letters stands somewhere between essays and biography and partakes of the interest of both. The good letter writer is as rare in printed books as in the mail bags that are now hurrying over the world; and the delight of reading good printed letters by a distinguished man is somewhat like the delight of reading a well-written letter from a friend. To be sure, a book of letters is not a masterwork of art, but it often brings pleasure when the reader is not just in mood for the artistic masterpiece, for the great poem or novel. I can recommend for a place in a library even of very limited dimensions such a collection of letters as Mr. E. V. Lucas's "The Gentlest Art," or Scoones's "English Letters."

It is said that the modern modes of communication, the telegraph, the telephone, the unpardonable post card, have caused or accompanied a decline in the art of letter writing. But the mail of the day has not yet been sorted; there may be great letter writers even now sending to their friends epistles that we shall some day wish to read in print. It hardly seems as if the world could be growing so unfriendly that it will let polite correspondence go the way of some other old-fashioned graces. Cer-

tainly the young man and the young woman can do nothing better for the pleasure of friends and family, and nothing better for their own self-cultivation, than to develop the habit of careful and courteous letter writing. Better than most school courses in literature and composition would be the daily practice of writing to some brother, sister or friend. One of the most remarkable young writers of the present day owes much of her purity of style, much of her education, to the practice of writing—no, of *rewriting* letters to her many friends.

Our friendly letters need not be stiff compositions written with the nose to the paper and the tongue squeezed painfully between the lips. But they should be written with care. A rewritten letter need not be an artificial thing. Why should we not take pains in phrasing a message to a friend? Neither sincerity nor "naturalness" enjoins us to send off the first blotted drafts of our communications, any more than freedom and "naturalness" oblige us to go out in public hastily dressed. Candor and spontaneity do not suffer from a care for our phrases and some thought in grooming our style.

If the courtly letter and the well-bred essay are not the characteristic literary form of our generation, we have some writers of satire and of literary and political opinions who deserve to be ranked among the essayists. Mr. F. P. Dunne would have been a pamphleteer in Swift's time, a writer of the chatty essay in the days of Lamb and Hunt. Since he was

born to bless our time, he finds a wider audience by putting his wit and wisdom, his Celtic blend of irony and humanity, into the mouth of "Mr. Dooley." Another essayist of great power, though he is probably not called an "essayist" in the encyclopedias, is Mark Twain. He promises us an interminable Autobiography, some parts of which have been published. It is to be different from all other autobiographies, for the principle of its construction is that it is to have no order; he will talk about anything that happens to interest him, talk about it until he is tired of it and then talk about something else. This unprincipled willfulness of order and subject is the essayist's special privilege. No man since Elia has succeeded better than Mark Twain in keeping up the interest of discursive monologue about things in general. Our public does not yet know how great a writer is this master of the American joke, and there are critics who will cry out that the mention of Mark Twain and Charles Lamb in the same breath is a violation of good sense. Yet Charles Lamb's "Autobiography" is, except in its brevity, as like to the fragments of Mark Twain as the work of two men can be.

"Below the middle stature," says Elia of himself, "cast of face slightly Jewish, with no Judaic tinge in his complexional religion; stammers abominably, and is therefore more apt to discharge his occasional conversation in a quaint aphorism, or a poor quibble, than in set and edifying speeches; has consequently been libeled as a person always aiming at wit;

which, as he told a dull fellow that charged him with it, is at least as good as aiming at dullness. A small eater, but not drinker; confesses a partiality for the production of the juniper berry; was a fierce smoker of tobacco, but may be resembled to a volcano burnt out, emitting only now and then an occasional puff. . . . He died ——, 18—, much lamented." The footnote to the last sentence reads: "To anybody. —Please to fill up these blanks." That is about as near to Mark Twain's manner of fooling as anything in literature. All the genial essayists are given to jest and quibble and folly. And when you come upon a writer whose fantastic whimsies and nonsensical abandon are charming, be sure to turn the page, for you will invariably find wisdom and pathos and greatness of heart.

In one class of essay Mark Twain is past master, the essay of travel. In "A Tramp Abroad" and "Following the Equator," not to speak of that satire on foolish American tourists, "Innocents Abroad," we have not only some of the best of Mark Twain's writing, but examples of a kind of essay in which very few authors have succeeded. The traveler who can see things with his own eye and make the reader see them, with a tramp's independence of what guide books, geographies, and histories say, is the rarest of companions. A good essay in travel looks easy when it is done, but is very seldom met with because the independent eye is so seldom placed in a human head. Moreover, until recent times of cheap transit, most men of letters have been obliged to stay at

home and make literature of domestic materials or what the great world sent them in books. Though literature of travel is very old, going back to the time when the first educated man visited a neighboring tribe and lived to return home and tell the tale, yet the personal essay of travel is, in its abundance, the product of the nineteenth century, when authors ceased to be poor and could circumnavigate the globe.

The English historian, Kinglake, is remembered not for his "Crimean War" but for his "Eothen," published in 1844. It was so strange and fresh a book of travel that several London publishers rejected it. An account of a journey in the East that omitted information about many great landmarks of Palestine and had not a word of statistics—how could a publisher recommend it to the British people? One secret of the book is that Kinglake, having tried to write his travels in various forms and having failed, hit on the plan of addressing his account to a friend, and the feeling of freedom which this gave him prevented him, he says, "from robing my thoughts in the grave and decorous style which I should have maintained if I had professed to lecture to the public. Whilst I feigned to myself that you, and only you, were listening, I could not by any possibility speak very solemnly. Heaven forbid that I should talk to my genial friend as though he were a great and enlightened Community, or any other respectable Aggregate." Thus it came about that Kinglake, aiming at one friend, reached the com-

munity, the "Aggregate," and found in it a host of friends.

In the same year that saw the publication of "Eothen," Thackeray began his "Journey from Cornhill to Cairo," another book of travel that stands like a green tree in a world of guide posts. Among American writers, besides Mark Twain, who have made delightful books of their journeys abroad, are Aldrich, Howells, and Charles Dudley Warner.

These touring essayists are usually more interested in living people than in monuments of the dead; and they take more pleasure in their own opinions and experiences than in encyclopedic facts. They are good traveling companions because they are stored with wisdom and sympathy before they set sail, and in the presence of strange sights and scenes they give play to their fancy. So they are akin not so much to the professional traveler, the geographer and student of social conditions, as to the essayist who is good company at home.

That is what the essayist must be, above all other writers—unfailing good company. He may be philosopher, historian, or critic, but if he is to be numbered among the choice company of essayists, his pages must be lighted by the glow of friendliness, enlivened by the voice of comradeship. Sometimes this friendliness takes terribly unfriendly forms, as in the stinging irony of Swift or the hot thunder and lightning of Carlyle; these preachers seem not to love their audience, but at heart they have sympathy even for us whom they browbeat, and it is not we, but the

heavy thoughts with which their souls are burdened, that have banished the smile from their faces.

LIST OF ESSAYS

Supplementary to Chapter VIII

JOSEPH ADDISON (1672–1719). *Selections from the Spectator.*

Edited by Thomas Arnold in the *Clarendon Press Series.* There are many school editions of the De Coverley papers. A sense of unity rather than of excellence has singled out the De Coverley papers for school reading and has made them, consequently, the best known of Addison's (and Steele's) work. But only about a third of the De Coverley papers are among the fifty best essays from the *Spectator.* Owing to the weight of eighteenth-century tradition, under which criticism is still laboring, Addison's reputation is greater among professional writers about literature than many modern readers, coming with fresh mind to the *Spectator,* can quite sincerely feel is justified. Only the mature reader who has some historical understanding of Addison's time can appreciate his cool wit and somewhat pallid humor, and feel how nearly perfect is the adaptation of his style to his purpose and his limited thoughts.

MATTHEW ARNOLD (1822–88). *Essays in Criticism. Culture and Anarchy.*

Arnold's essays on books and writers are among the very best, for he combines deep knowledge of lit-

erature with the charm of the true essayist. His essays on "Culture," like many of the literary sermons of Carlyle and Ruskin, propound with great earnestness what every well-bred person takes more or less for granted. But one reason we take the need of culture for granted, one reason that such sermons are becoming obsolete, is because Carlyle and Ruskin and Arnold made their ideas, through their writings and the hosts of writers they influenced, part of the common current thought of our time.

Francis Bacon (1561–1626). *Essays. Wisdom of the Ancients. The Advancement of Learning.*

There are many inexpensive editions of the "Essays," and good texts of Bacon's other work in English prose have been prepared for students. Owing to their brevity the "Essays" are the best known of Bacon's prose work. But compared with the longer works of Bacon, they are scarcely more than *tours de force*, experiments in epigrammatic condensation. Not the young reader, but the mature reader who would know the Elizabethan age, its noblest thinker and the most eloquent prose contemporary with the King James Bible, will wish to read Bacon's life and works in Spedding's edition.

Thomas Browne (1605–82). *Religio Medici. Urn Burial. Enquiries into Vulgar Errors.*

The three or four small books of this very great essayist are to be found in a volume of the *Golden*

Treasury Series, and also in the fine little Dent edition.

EDMUND BURKE (1729–97). *Speech on American Taxation. Speech on Conciliation with America. Letter to the Sheriffs of Bristol.*

A good edition of Burke's principal speeches is that edited by F. G. Selby and published by Macmillan. The prescriptions of the schools have made the "Speech on Conciliation" familiar as a difficult thing to analyze rather than as a magnificent essay (for essay it is, though delivered as a speech). Burke's other philosophic and political essays are among the great prose of his century and should be sought both by the student of history and by the reader of literature.

JOHN BURROUGHS. *Birds and Poets. Locusts and Wild Honey. Wake-Robin.*

After Thoreau Mr. Burroughs is the most distinguished of modern writers on nature and out-of-door life.

THOMAS CARLYLE (1795–1881). *Sartor Resartus. Heroes and Hero-Worship. Past and Present. Critical and Miscellaneous Essays.*

"Heroes and Hero-Worship" is, for the beginner, the best, because the clearest, of Carlyle's work. Carlyle's opinions become of less and less consequence as time passes, and he remains great by virtue of the superbly eloquent passages in which the poet overcomes the preacher. He is an illustrious example of

the fact that nothing passes so rapidly as the beliefs of a day which a preacher hurls at the world about him—and at posterity,—and also of the fact that eloquence and beauty survive the original burning question which gave them life and which later generations are interested in only from a biographic and historic point of view. The essay carries in it the journalistic bacteria that make for its speedy dissolution, but the poetic thought, whatever the occasion of its utterance, outlives circumstance and changes of ideas and taste.

Cicero. *Letters and Orations.*

In English, in *Everyman's Library.*

Samuel McChord Crothers. *The Gentle Reader.*

The most charming and humorously wise of living American essayists.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772–1834). *Biographia Literaria. Lectures on Shakespeare.*

Both in *Bohn's Library* and in *Everyman's Library.* Coleridge's detached opinions on books are golden fragments of criticism. His "Lectures on Shakespeare" are, for a reader with imagination, the most inspiring notes on Shakespeare that we have, though the many and patent inaccuracies make his comments distasteful to modern scholars, who prefer to commit their own inaccuracies.

William Cowper (1731–1800). *Letters.*

In the *Golden Treasury Series.*

Daniel Defoe (1661–1731). *Essay on Projects. The Shortest Way with the Dissenters.*

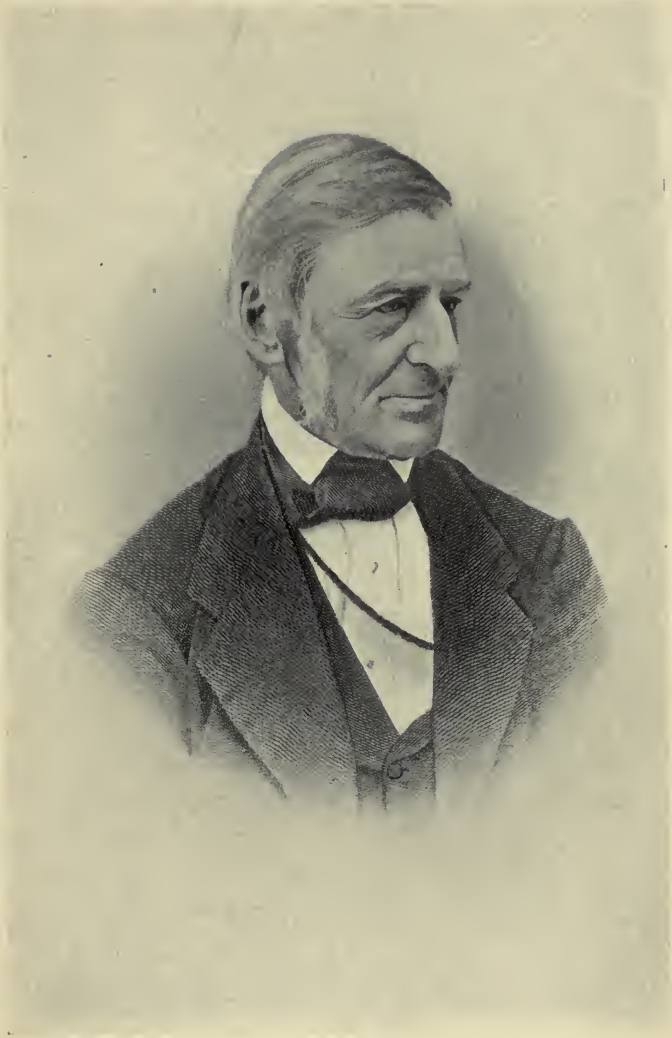
Defoe was a journalist and pamphleteer who lacked the charm of the true essayist, but whose prose in essay form is worth reading for its vigor and variety of idea.

Thomas De Quincey (1785–1859). *Selections.*

In one volume, published by Houghton, Mifflin & Co. "The Confessions of an English Opium-Eater" is in *Everyman's Library,* and also the "Reminiscences of the Lake Poets." Dr. Quincey's beautiful poetic prose is unlike anything before or since. The "Opium-Eater" belongs perhaps under "Biography," but may stand here. Its somewhat sensational subject has secured for it, fortunately, a wide reading and so kept De Quincey from passing into the shadowy company of distinguished writers known only to the few. His essays fill many volumes. Those in the inexpensive volume in the *Camelot Series,* published by Walter Scott, include some of the best and should be read, perhaps, before the "Opium-Eater."

John Dryden (1631–1700).

There are collections of Dryden's prose, but the best way to become acquainted with "the father of modern English prose" is to run through his complete works and read the remarkable prefaces to his plays and poems. In them English criticism, for all the merit of some essays earlier in the seventeenth century, really begins.



EMERSON

Finley Peter Dunne. *Mr. Dooley in Peace and War. Mr. Dooley in the Hearts of His Countrymen. Mr. Dooley's Philosophy.*

Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803–82). *Essays. Representative Men. The Conduct of Life. Society and Solitude.*

Emerson's essays, including "The American Scholar" (which is as fresh and pertinent to our time as if written yesterday), have been printed in inexpensive editions by Houghton, Mifflin & Co. The volumes named above should be owned in American households. More than Carlyle or Ruskin or any other of the preaching essayists of the nineteenth century, Emerson emerges as the prophetic, visionary spirit who seized and phrased the best moral and spiritual ideas that his time had to offer to future times.

John Florio (1550–1625). *Translation of Montaigne's Essays.*

There are several handy editions, notably the pocket edition, published by Dent, of this famous translation whereby Montaigne became an English classic.

Oliver Goldsmith (1728–74). *The Citizen of the World.*

Among the lighter satirical essays of the eighteenth century "The Citizen of the World" is second only to the *Spectator*, if not equal to it.

William Hazlitt (1778–1830). *Essays.*

A good selection appears in the *Camelot Series.* "Though we are mighty fine fellows nowadays," says Stevenson, "we cannot write like Hazlitt." (See Hazlitt's "English Comic Writers" and "Lectures on the English Poets" for his studies of Shakespeare).

Lafcadio Hearn. *Glimpses of Unfamiliar Japan. Kokoro: Hints and Echoes of Japanese Inner Life.*

Oliver Wendell Holmes (1809–94). *Autocrat of the Breakfast Table. Professor at the Breakfast Table. Poet at the Breakfast Table.*

In *Everyman's Library* and in inexpensive editions, published by Houghton, Mifflin & Co. A wise, witty, beautifully lucid mind. Holmes snatched philosophy from the library and brought it to the breakfast table so that the poorest boarder goes to his day's work from the company of an immortal who has met him halfway and talked to him without condescension.

James Henry Leigh Hunt (1784–1859). *Essays.*

One volume of selections in the *Camelot Series.* Also in two volumes with his poems in the *Temple Classics* (Dent & Co.). Young readers who will look at Hunt's essay "On Getting Up on Cold Mornings" will not need to be urged further into his delightful society.

Richard Jefferies (1848–87). *An English Village. Field and Hedgerow. The Open Air. The Story of My Heart.*

Samuel Johnson (1709–84). *Lives of the Poets.*

Students of literature will wish to read one or two of Johnson's criticisms. He was a much greater man than writer, better as a talker and letter writer than as an essayist. A good selection from the "Lives of the Poets" is edited by Matthew Arnold.

Charles Lamb (1775–1834). *Essays of Elia.*

See pages 183–6 of this Guide.

Abraham Lincoln (1809–65). *Letters and Speeches.*

To be found in the complete works, edited by Nicolay and Hay, and in several small volumes of selections; the volume in *Everyman's Library* has an introduction by James Bryce.

James Russell Lowell (1819–91). *Among My Books. My Study Windows. Democracy and Other Addresses. Political Essays. Letters.*

The foremost American critic. Interest in the bookish and literary side of Lowell should not lead us to overlook his ringing political essays, notably that on Lincoln, written during the war and remarkable as having phrased at the moment the judgment of the next generation.

Thomas Babington Macaulay (1800–59). *Essays.*

There are many editions of the more familiar essays of Macaulay, especially those that have formed a part of school and college reading courses. The essay on Milton, unfortunately prescribed in college preparatory work, is one of the poorest. Those on Clive and Hastings, also often prescribed, are among the best. It is the prevailing fashion to underrate Macaulay as a critic, as it was perhaps in his lifetime the fashion to overrate him. He is lastingly powerful and invigorating, a great essayist, if only because he knows so well what he wishes to say and knows precisely how to say it. He is not subtle, not poetic, but his clear large intellect is still a bright light through the many-hued mists of Victorian criticism.

John Milton (1608–74). *Areopagitica, etc.*

Milton's prose is difficult to read and only a little of it is worth reading except by the student of Milton and the student of history. The noblest passages of Milton's prose have been collected in a single volume, edited by Ernest Myers, and published by Kegan Paul, Trench & Co.

John Muir. *The Mountains of California. Our National Parks.*

John Henry Newman (1801–90). *Idea of a University. Apologia pro Vita Sua.*

An admirable volume of selections, edited by Lewis E. Gates, is published by Henry Holt & Co. Newman's "Apologia" belongs properly in our list

of Biography, but it is really an essay in defense of certain of his ideas. Owing to the fact that Newman's work is largely religious controversy and discourse directed to practical rather than artistic ends, his literary power and the beauty of his prose have not won him so many readers as he deserves.

Blaise Pascal (1623–62). *Provincial Letters.*

In the English translation of Thomas M'Crie.

Walter Horatio Pater (1839–94). *The Renaissance. Appreciations.*

The finest English critic of his generation. Contrary to a current impression that Pater is for the "ultra-literary," most of his work is clear and simple; the essays on Wordsworth and Coleridge are the best to which a reader of those poets can turn.

John Ruskin (1819–1900). *Sesame and Lilies. Crown of Wild Olive. Queen of the Air. Frondes Agrestes.*

There are fourteen volumes of Ruskin in *Everyman's Library.* "Sesame and Lilies" and "Frondes Agrestes" (selected passages from "Modern Painters") have been often reprinted. The best of Ruskin's prose is very beautiful, the worst is tediously prolix. He regretted that his eloquence took attention from his subject matter, but like Carlyle, he lives by his eloquence and poetry rather than by his opinions and teachings.

Sydney Smith (1771–1845). *The Peter Plymley Letters. Essays.*

In one volume, published by Ward, Lock & Co. After Swift, perhaps the wittiest English essayist who used his keen weapons in the interests of justice.

Richard Steele (1671–1729). *Essays* from the *Tatler* and the *Spectator.*

Steele is usually found with Addison in selections from the *Spectator.*

Robert Louis Stevenson (1849–94). *Familiar Studies of Men and Books. Memories and Portraits. An Inland Voyage. Travels with a Donkey.*

The best thoughts of this romancer and some of the best of his writing are in his essays.

Jonathan Swift (1667–1745). *Selected Prose.*

Selections from his prose writings are to be found in a volume of the *Camelot Series* and also in a small volume published by D. Appleton & Co. Not until the reader is familiar with "Gulliver's Travels" and has some understanding of Swift's life and the historical background of his work, can he feel the genius of the satirical essays and political lampoons. Swift is often repellent to those who only half understand him, but he grows in power and dignity to those who appreciate his underlying righteousness.

William Makepeace Thackeray (1811–63). *Book of Snobs. Roundabout Papers. From Cornhill to Cairo. English Humorists.*

Thackeray is an essayist by temperament and shows it in his novels. His satirical and literary

essays may be reserved until after one has read his novels, but they will not be overlooked by anyone who likes Thackeray or who likes good essays.

Henry David Thoreau (1817–62). *A Week on the Concord and Merrimac Rivers. Walden. Excursions. The Maine Woods. Cape Cod. Spring. Summer. Winter. Autumn.*

Thoreau's work is one long autobiographical journal ranging from brief diary notes on nature to full rounded essays. A prose poet of nature, and second to Emerson only as a philosophic essayist on nature and society. His greatness becomes more and more evident in an age when "nature writers" are popular.

Izaak Walton (1593–1683). *The Complete Angler.* In *Everyman's Library.*

Charles Dudley Warner (1829–1900). *In the Wilderness. As We Go. Backlog Studies. In the Levant.*

A charming essayist, a humorous lover of books and nature. His reputation has waned somewhat during the past twenty years, but Americans cannot afford to lose sight of him.

Daniel Webster (1782–1852). *Speeches and Orations.*

In one volume, published by Little, Brown & Co. The literary quality of Webster's orations entitles them to a place among American essays.

CHAPTER X

THE READING OF FOREIGN CLASSICS

SINCE there is not time in the short life of man to read all the good books written in one language, the young reader, or even the person who has formed the habit of reading, may feel that he need never go beyond the books of his own race. In a sense this is true. Perhaps it is especially true for us who are born to the English language. For the English people, however insular they may be in some respects, have always been great explorers of the lands and the thoughts of other races. They have plundered the literature of their neighbors and loaded the borrowed riches into their own books. In the Elizabethan age some writers seem to have regarded it as a patriotic duty to render for their countrymen the choicest literature of France and Italy and Spain. While they were robbing their neighbors across the channel, they were also building English classics out of the literary monuments of "insolent Greece and haughty Rome." And for many generations English writers, like those of other modern countries, have been brought up on the classics.

So we find incorporated in English literature the

culture of the entire ancient and modern world, and one who should read only English books could still have a full mind and a cultivated spirit. We cannot say, therefore, that it is necessary, in order to realize the true purpose of reading, to make excursions into the literature of foreign countries. But we can point out the advantage of such excursions, and I would insist on the ease with which the ordinary person, who has enjoyed only a limited formal education, can make himself acquainted with foreign languages and literatures if he will.

In our time we have schools to teach everything known to man from advertising to zoölogy. It is well that our schools are broadening in interest and that every kind of knowledge is being organized so that it can be imparted. But there is a danger that we may get into the habit of leaving too much for the schools, that we may come to think that the schools monopolize all knowledge, or at least all the methods of teaching. This would be a great pity in a nation that is proud of self-made men. We, of all peoples, must remember what Walter Scott said, that the best part of a man's education is that which he gives himself. Schools and universities only start us in a methodical way, on a short well-surveyed path, into the world of knowledge. Most of the learning of educated men and women is acquired after they have left the college gates, and anyone may set out on the road to knowledge with little direct assistance from the schools. The better, the easier for us, if we can go to college; but if we

cannot have the advantage of formal education we need not resign ourselves to ignorance.[1]

Most young people, however, will think of Greek, Latin, French, and German as difficult and "learned" mysteries accessible only to the fortunate who can go to the higher schools, and of use only to those who intend to enter scientific and literary professions. If I say that with no knowledge of any language but English you can teach yourself any other language well enough to read it, I hope you will not shake your head and say that such self-teaching is possible only to extraordinary intellects. Many commonplace persons have learned languages by reading them, with no equipment but a lexicon, a short grammar, and an interesting text. Perhaps it is not fair on top of that statement to cite the case of Elihu Burritt, for he was an exceptional man. But as readers will learn from his excellent "Autobiography," he began his studies under very difficult circumstances; so that, taking all things together, talent and conditions, many a young man can start where he began and under no greater disadvantages. Burritt would have gone some way on the road to learning even if his endowments had been small. And with no genius but the genius of industry we can follow for a little distance his democratic course.

Burritt was a blacksmith by trade. He had only such education as he could get in a country academy, where his brother was the master. In his leisure he

[1] See also page 241.

studied mathematics and languages, and before he died he had acquired a reading knowledge of fifty tongues and dialects, ancient and modern. Yet he was not a self-absorbed man who shut himself up in profitless culture. He became a world-wide apostle of peace. The study of languages taught him that all men are brothers. If he could learn fifty foreign languages, any of us can learn one, and through that one we too shall understand that we are not an isolated people, not the only people in the world. We shall meet in their native tongue some great group of our brothers, the Germans, the French, the Italians, learn their ideals and broaden our own. It is impossible to learn Greek and Latin and not to feel how close we are to the peoples of two thousand years ago. It is impossible to learn French or German and keep in our hearts any of that contempt for "foreigners" which ignorant and provincial people so stupidly cherish.

We shall arrive, too, through knowledge of another language at a finer appreciation of our own language, its shades and distinctions, its variety and power. We shall understand better the great English writers, many of whom have known something of foreign literature and refer in a familiar way to French and German and ancient classics, as if they took for granted in their readers an acquaintance with the literature of other nations.

How shall we go to work to learn foreign languages? The answer is as simple as the prescription for reading English. Open a book written in the

foreign language and take each word in order through a whole sentence. Then read that same sentence in a good translation. Then write down all the words that seem to be nouns and all the words that seem to be verbs. After that read the sections in the grammar about verbs and nouns. The other parts of speech will take care of themselves for a while. Then try another sentence. I know one young person who read through a French book and got at its meaning by guessing at the words and then returning over those which appeared oftenest and which, of course, were the commonest. It is possible by a comparison of the many uses of the same word to squeeze some meaning out of it. The dictionary and the grammar will give the rest.

The foreign book stores, the publishers of text books, and the purveyors of home teaching methods that are advertised in the more reputable journals offer language books that are of real assistance. The scope of this Guide does not admit any detailed instruction in the methods of learning foreign languages. I can only insist that with a few books and perseverance anyone can learn, not to speak, perhaps not to write, but to read a strange tongue. And I say to the boy or the girl who is going to the high school that not to take the courses in Greek, Latin, French and German is to throw away a precious opportunity. Upon the grounding of those few years in school, the young receptive years, what a knowledge of languages one can build! The notion, all too prevalent, that foreign languages, especially

Greek and Latin, are of no use to the boy or the girl who is going "right into business," is one of the dullest fallacies with which a hard-working practical people ever blinded its soul. Playing the piano and learning to sing, nay, even going to church, are of no use in business. But who will be so foolish as to devote his whole life to business? Burritt, the blacksmith boy, taught himself languages. The high-school boy who is going to be a blacksmith can begin to study languages before he picks up the tools of his bread-winning labor. If this seems like the vain idealism of a bookish person, let me make an appeal to your patriotism. Do you know that this land of opportunity and prosperity is not developing so many fundamentally educated men and women as we should expect from our vast system of public schools and our many universities? One reason is that we have so many bread-and-butter Americans who allow their boys and girls to stay away from those classes in Greek and Latin and French and German which our high schools provide at such great cost to the generous taxpayer. All we lack in America is the will to use the good things we have provided for us.

Well, we who are interested in the reading of good books will make up our minds to get by hook or crook a little taste of some language besides English. If we truly care for poetry we shall try to read Virgil and Homer and Dante and Goethe. To become gradually familiar with one great foreign poet, so that we know him as we know Shakespeare, is to conquer a whole new world.

The easiest books to read in a foreign tongue are prose fictions, in which the interest of the story spurs the reader on and makes him eager for the meanings of the words. Text-book publishers issue inexpensive editions of modern French and German fictions, which are, of course, selected by the editors with a view to their fitness for young readers. The French or German book which has become a recognized classic in its native land and is considered by editors of school books to be a good classroom text is likely to have universal literary qualities, simplicity, purity of style, and right-mindedness. I find in admirable inexpensive texts representative stories by Dumas, Zola, George Sand, Halévy, Daudet, Pierre Loti, Balzac, Hugo, About, and other French masters, and by Freytag, Baumbach, Sudermann, and Heyse among modern German writers. French and German drama and history lie but a step beyond. I, for one, have read more of these school editions of foreign classics since I left school than when they were part of school-day duty, and I am still grateful for the convenient notes and lists of hard words. As one with only an imperfect reading knowledge of foreign languages, I can testify with the right degree of authority to the pleasure of the ordinary person in reading unfamiliar tongues. If one has a fair grounding of Latin, the exploration of Italian and Spanish is a tour through a cleared and easy country. With Professor Norton's wonderful prose translation and with the text of Dante in the *Temple Classics,* where the English version faces the Italian, page

for page, one can read Dante as one would read Chaucer. And there could be no better way to learn the difference between prose and poetry than to turn now and again to Longfellow's truly poetic translation and feel how his verse lifts in places to something that the prose cannot quite attain.

If we are not persuaded that our soul's good depends on a knowledge of foreign languages, we can make the acquaintance of the classics of other nations in the best English renderings. Our greatest book, the King James Bible, is a translation, so great a translation that in point of style it is said by some critical scholars to be better than its Greek and Hebrew originals. In general it is true that translation falls below the original or radically changes its character. Until the nineteenth century, when the scholars of our race began to give us literal translations of the classics, which although "literal" are still idiomatic English, translators in our tongue have been, as a rule, willful conquerors who dominated the native spirit of their originals with the overwhelming power of the English language and spirit. They anglicized the foreign masterpiece so that its own father would not recognize it. The result was often, as in Pope's "Iliad," a new English classic but not a good pathway to the house of the foreign poet.

Pope's "Iliad" is a "classic" but it is poor Homer and not the best of Pope. His genius is much better expressed in "The Rape of the Lock." And Homer's genius is much better preserved for us in the simple prose of Leaf, Myers, Butcher, and

Lang. Professor G. H. Palmer's "Odyssey" is so good that no translator hereafter has a right to plead as excuse for the failure of his version of any classic that "the English language will not do it." Matthew Arnold's essay "On Translating Homer" will stimulate the reader's interest in the art of translation and help bring him near to the Greek spirit. But this essay goes into subtleties which may baffle the beginner. Any beginner, old enough to read at all, can read Professor Palmer's "Odyssey." Many books of Greek stories and legends of the heroes have been prepared for young readers. "Old Greek Stories" by C. H. Hanson, or A. J. Church's books of Greek life and story, together with Bulfinch's "Age of Fable," will initiate one into the Homeric mysteries.[1]

After the reader has advanced far enough to be interested in philosophy, he will wish to read Epictetus and Plato. Jowett's "Plato" is one of the great translations of the nineteenth century. The reader of Browning will not omit his noble, if somewhat difficult translation of the "Agamemnon" of Æschylus. From the early Elizabethans to the late Victorians the works of the English poets are starred with bits from the Latin and Greek poets. One of the finest of translations from the Greek is the "Theocritus" of Charles Stuart Calverley, the English poet, who loved all things beautiful and enjoyed all things absurd. Calverley's translations from the classics and his delicious burlesques and parodies will

[1] See also the discussion of Chapman, pp. 245–8 of this Guide.

give one a new sense of how close together the different moods of literature may lie in the same heart, both the heart of the poet and the heart of the reader.

If an artistic translation of a foreign work has not been made or is not easily accessible, a literal translation is of great service to the casual reader. Even in the preparation of lessons in Latin and Greek a literal translation, honestly used, helps one to learn the original language and extends one's English vocabulary. The reason there is a ban upon the "pony" in school is that people ride it too hard and do not learn to walk on their own feet. Out of school we can get much from literal renderings of the classics, such as are to be found in the cheap series of *Handy Literal Translations,* published by Hinds & Co. Their fault is that they are printed in tryingly small type, but this is a defect due to their merits of compactness and low cost.

The best translation of Vergil is Conington's prose version, which has become an English classic. The introduction is one of the best essays on translating. There are several renderings of Vergil into English verse. Dryden's is the best known, and is of interest to the reader of English principally because Dryden did it. He brought to Vergil somewhat the same ideals of translation and the same kind of skill that Pope brought to the "Iliad." William Morris's version is probably the most fluent and poetic of modern translations of Vergil into Eng lish verse.

The Latin poet who has been most often trans-

lated, and by the greatest variety of talent, is Horace, whom our forefathers thought that every gentleman should be able to quote. The accomplished translator likes to match his skill against the clever Roman, to render his light philosophy, his keen phrase, his beautiful brevity. The American will like the free and joyous "Echoes from the Sabine Farm," by the late Eugene Field and his brother, Mr. Roswell Field, a book that must have made the shade of Horace inquire appreciatively in what part of the world Chicago is "located."

Modern literature in all countries has attracted the readers of other countries, and the work of translation is going on continuously. Not only the great foreign classics of the last three hundred years, but a host of lesser writers on the continent of Europe have made their way into English. At the beginning of the nineteenth century there was a new interest in German literature and philosophy—indeed, there was a new German literature. Goethe was translated by Sir Walter Scott and others. Coleridge translated Schiller's "Wallenstein." Carlyle made a number of translations from German romance, among them a glowing version of Goethe's "Wilhelm Meister," which, in part, suggested his own strange masterpiece, "Sartor Resartus." Bayard Taylor's poetic version of "Faust" is of interest to the American reader and is no mean representation of the original.

Hugo and Dumas are as well known to us as Scott and Dickens. Who has not read "Les Miserables" and "The Hunchback of Notre Dame" and

"The Toilers of the Sea"; "The Count of Monte Cristo" and "The Three Musketeers"? "The Devil's Pool," "Mauprat" and "The Little Fadette" by George Sand have been English literature these many years. So, too, have "Eugenie Grandet" and "Le Père Goriot" by Balzac, the first of the great French realists whose work has come to us directly in translation and indirectly through the English and American writers whom they have influenced.

As for later French fiction we can trust to the taste of English translators, as we can to the judgment of the editors of the school texts, to give us the best, that is, the best for us. The finest of Maupassant comes to us politely introduced by Mr. Henry James in "The Odd Number." Bourget, Daudet, Pierre Loti, Mérimée, Halévy, the great Belgian poet, Maeterlinck, who belongs to French literature, Anatole France in his beautiful story, "The Crime of Sylvestre Bonnard," the poet Rostand—these and others we have naturalized in English. It is to France that we turn for the best criticism, and the reader who gets far enough to be interested in that branch of literature will find that many of the critics of our race have been pupils of the French critics from Sainte-Beuve to Brunetière and Hennequin.

Other countries besides France, Germany, and England have produced literature which has crossed the boundaries of the nations and become the possession of the world. The Russian novel is, perhaps, the most powerful that the nineteenth century has seen, but the American reader may as well leave it until he has

read a great deal of English fiction. Then he will find that Turgenieff, Tolstoi, Dostoevski are giants in a giant nation. Poland has one writer who is known to English readers, Sienkiewicz, whose "Quo Vadis" and "With Fire and Sword" are among the great novels of our age. I should recommend that admirers of "Ben Hur" read "Quo Vadis" and get a lesson in the difference between a masterpiece and a pleasant book that is very much less than a masterpiece. Readers who think there is some special virtue in American humor—and no doubt there is—ought to know at least one of the great books of Spain, "Don Quixote." Spanish has become an important language to us who are learning about our neighbors, "the other Americans," and are trying to wake up our lagging trade relations with them and our backward sympathies. The young man going into business will find some good chances open to him if he knows Spanish, and, what is perhaps quite as important, he will find that Spain, too, has a modern literature.

We cannot know all foreign literatures, but we can know at least one. Whether we visit in spirit Italy or Norway or Spain or Russia, we shall be learning the great lesson of literature, that our brothers the world over are doing and thinking and hoping the same things that we are. Reading foreign books [1] is the cheapest and perhaps the wisest kind of travel, for the body rests while the mind goes abroad.

[1] Books in foreign languages and English translations will be found in their proper place in the lists of fiction, poetry, etc.

CHAPTER XI

THE PRESS OF TO-DAY

IF we were guiding an intelligent stranger from another planet through our busy world, before what institution should we pause with greatest anxiety to explain to our alien comrade its meaning, its value? Perhaps before the church, yet when we remembered that the Bible and other works of religion and poetry are in our homes, we could not bring ourselves to tell our companion that the church is the heart, the indispensable fountain of our religious life. The school then? Maybe that, yet Knowledge spends in the school but relatively few hours of her day-long ministrations. We might wax eloquent before the hospitals, but they are only repairing some of the damages which man and nature have inflicted upon a small part of the race, and it is the healthy major portion of humanity that carries on the life of the world and does whatever is worth doing. It would be simple to explain the thundering factories whose din drowns the voice of the expositor, to tell how in yonder building are made the machines that cut and thresh the wheat that feeds the world, and how in the building beyond are made the cars that bring the wheat from the fields to the teeming towns. All

these institutions are wonderful, all are essential in our life. Yet greater than any, more difficult to explain, inspiring and disheartening, grinding good and evil, is the press, from which our visitor could see streaming forth thousands of tons of paper blackened with the imprint of little types.

The stranger could see that. We should have to make it clear to him that those types are turning over once a year almost all that man has ever known and thought. The contemporary press is engaged in three kinds of activity: the reprinting of old books, the printing of new ones, and the printing of the magazines, periodicals, newspapers, and other communications relating to the conduct of daily business.

The first activity, the printing of old books, is an unmixed blessing. Every book, great or small, that the world has found worth preserving is continuously revived and redistributed to our generation. Never before were the classics of the ages so cheap, so accessible to the common man.

Toward the second product of the whirling presses, the books of to-day, our attitude may easily become too censorious or too complacent. It is the fashion to slander the productions of one's own age and recall with a sigh the good old days when there were giants. But in those good old days it was fashionable, too, to underrate or ignore the living and praise the dead. When the Elizabethan age was waning but not vanished, Ben Jonson wrote: "Now things daily fall, wits grow downward, and eloquence grows

backward." And yet Milton, the greatest poet after Shakespeare, was even then a young man and had not done his noblest work. A century later Pope wrote:

> Be thou the first true merit to befriend;
> His praise is lost who stays till all commend.
> Short is the date, alas, of modern rhymes,
> And 'tis but just to let them live betimes.
> No longer now the golden age appears
> When Patriarch-wits surviv'd a thousand years:
> Now length of Fame (our second life) is lost,
> And bare three score is all even that can boast;
> Our sons their fathers' failing language see,
> And such as Chaucer is shall Dryden be.

But Chaucer is more alive now than he was in Pope's day, and both Dryden and Pope are brightly modern in diction if not in thought. Pope's idea is not so much that his contemporaries are unworthy of long life as that changes in taste and language will soon make their work obsolete. He pleads for his contemporaries, yet like many another critic he is *laudator temporis acti,* a praiser of times past and done. His injunction that we befriend and commend our neighbor's merit before it speedily perishes is generous but fails to recognize that merit, true merit, does not die. This is certainly true in our time when books are so easily manifolded and come into so many hands that there is little likelihood of a real poet's work being accidentally annihilated, or failing to find a reader somewhere in the world.

In the nineteenth century pessimism about current

literary productions was almost chronic, at least among professional critics. The Edinburgh Reviewers and the other Scotch terrier, Thomas Carlyle, set the whole century to growling at itself. Thoreau, with a humorous parenthesis to the effect that it is permissible to slander one's own time, says that Elizabethan writers—and he seems to be speaking not of the poets but the prose writers—have a greater vigor and naturalness than the more modern, and that a quotation from an Elizabethan in a modern writer is like a green bough laid across the page. Stevenson says we are fine fellows but cannot write like Hazlitt (there is no reason why we should write like Hazlitt, or like anybody else in particular). Emerson, tolerant and generous toward his contemporaries, looks askance at new books, implies with an ambiguous "if" that "our times are sterile in genius," and lays down as a practical rule, "Never read any book that is not a year old,"—which being translated means, "Encourage literature by starving your authors."

As we have said, most of the great authors are dead because most of the people ever born in this world are dead. And it is natural for bookmen to glance about their libraries, review the dignified backs of a hundred classics, and then, looking the modern world in the face, say, "Can any of you fellows do as well as these great ones?" To be sure, one age cannot rival the selected achievements of a hundred ages. But the Spirit of Literature is abroad in our garish modern times; she has been continu-

ously occupied for at least three centuries in every civilized country in the world. And, as Pope pleads, let us welcome the labors of those whom the Spirit of Literature brushes with her wing.

So far as one can judge, a very small part of contemporaneous writing has literary excellence in any degree. But a similarly small portion of the writing of any age has had lasting excellence; and more men and women, more kinds of men and women, are to-day expressing themselves in print than ever in the world before. Since no one person has to read many books, the world is not unduly burdened with them; it can read, classify, and reject or preserve all that the presses are capable of putting forth. "The trash with which the press now groans" was foolish cant a hundred years ago, when Jane Austen satirically quoted it.[1] And it is more threadbare now than it was then. There are alive to-day a goodly company of competent writers of novels; I could name ten. I believe, too, that there are genuine poets, though we do not dare name young poets until they are dead. History and biography are, regarded as a collective institution, in flourishing state, though, to be sure, the work of art in those departments of literature as in poetry and fiction, appears none too frequently. It is our part to join in the work of that great critic, the World, encourage the good and discourage the bad, and help make the best book the "best seller."

It would be foolish to hope for that ideal condition in which only authors of ability should write

[1] See page 42.

books. "Were angels to write, I fancy we should have but few folios." But writing is a human affair, and human labor is necessarily wasteful. We have to endure the printing of a hundred poor books and we have to support a score of inferior writers in order to get one good book and give one talented writer a part of his living. Thousands of machines are built and thrown away before the Wrights make one that will fly, and they could not make theirs if other men had not tried and in large part failed, bequeathing them a little experience. A hundred men for a hundred years contributed to the making of Bell's telephone. We do not grudge the wasted machines, the broken apparatus in the laboratory. So, too, when hundreds of minor poets print their little books and suffer heartache and disappointment for the sake of the one volume of verse that shows genius, we need not groan amid the whir of the presses; we need only contemplate with sympathy and understanding the pathetic losses and brave gains of human endeavor. Numberless books must be born and die in order that the one or two may live. We shall try to ignore the minor versifier as gently as possible, to suppress the cheap novelist as firmly as we can, and give our dollar for the good book when we think we have found it.

The third part of the printed matter published from day to day, periodicals and magazines and newspapers, presents a complex problem. It is in place for us to say a word about it, for this is avowedly a guide to reading and not a guide to literature, and

most of us spend, properly, a good third of our reading time over magazines and newspapers. Much depends on our making ourselves not only intelligent readers of books but intelligent readers of periodicals and papers.

The magazine industry in America is colossal, and its chief support is that amazing business institution, American advertising. The public pays a big tax on flour, shoes, clothes, paint, and every other commodity in order that advertisers may pay for space in periodicals and newspapers. The periodicals and newspapers, in turn, pay writers from a fiftieth to a twentieth of the income from advertising in order to make the advertising medium interesting enough for people to buy it.

In this the magazine manufacturers are on the whole successful. Perhaps there are sages and seers who can live content with bound books and prefer that those books should be at least fifty years old. I know of one man, a constant reader of poetry and philosophy, who tried the experiment of retiring to his library and stopping all his subscriptions to the current periodicals. The experiment was an utter failure, because he was a man of active intelligence, and because, in truth, the magazines, many of them, are very good. No less a philosopher than Professor William James said in a recent article: "*McClure's Magazine, The American Magazine, Collier's Weekly* and in its fashion, *The World's Work,* constitute together a real popular university. . . . It would be a pity if any future historian were to

have to write words like these: 'By the middle of the twentieth century the higher institutions of learning had lost all influence over public opinion in the United States. But the mission of raising the tone of democracy which they had proved themselves so lamentably unfitted to exert, was assumed with rare enthusiasm and prosecuted with extraordinary skill and success by a new educational power; and for the clarification of their human preferences, the people at large acquired the habit of resorting exclusively to the guidance of certain private literary ventures, commonly designated in the market by the affectionate name of ten-cent magazines.' Must not we of the colleges see to it that no historian shall ever say anything like this?"

The possible failure, here implied, of universities to lead in the subjects which they profess to study has already become actual in the departments of English literature. Of this we shall say something in the next chapter.

It is, however, the other side of the matter that is important. Our best magazines are vital: they are enlisting the services of every kind of thinker and teacher and man of experience, and they are printing as good fiction and verse as they can get; certainly they are not willfully printing inferior work. But it is not the fiction or the verse in the magazines that is of greatest moment, even when it is good. The value of the magazine lies in the miscellaneous contributions on science, politics, medicine, and current affairs, which seem to me of continuously good sub-

stance from month to month. And the literary quality of these articles (the words I quoted from Professor James are from a fine article printed in a popular magazine, *McClure's*) is, on the whole, just as high as the average in the old *Edinburgh Review,* through which Sydney Smith, Lord Jeffrey, and others, with stinging and brilliant essays, helped to reform that terribly brutal England of the early nineteenth century.

It is easy to find fault with the magazines. You may say that the *Atlantic Monthly* is pseudo-literary and seems to be living on the sweepings of a New England culture of which all the important representatives died twenty years ago. You may say that the *Nation* often sounds as if it were written by the more narrow-minded sort of college professor. You may say that the *Outlook* is permeated by a weak religiosity. All the same, if you see on a man's table the *Atlantic Monthly,* the *Nation,* and the *Outlook,* and the copies look as if they had been read, you may be reasonably sure that that man appreciates good writing and has a just-minded view of public questions.

Of the lighter, more "entertaining" magazines there are, from an ideal point of view, too many, and the large circulation of some of the sillier ones indicates what we all know and need not moralize about —that there are millions of uneducated people who want something to read. It is, however, a matter for congratulation that some of the best magazines, *McClure's, Collier's, The Youth's Companion,*

Everybody's, have large circulations, and that our respectable and well-bred old friends, *Scribner's, Harper's,* the *Century,* are national institutions.[1]

It is difficult to understand how the American magazine and the American newspaper are products of the same nation; the magazine is so honest and so able, the newspaper so dishonest and so ignorant except in its genius for making money and sending chills up the back. We will not waste our time by turning the rest of this chapter into an article demanding a "reform" of the newspapers, but in the spirit of a conscientious guide of young readers we will make two or three observations.

The advertising departments of the American newspaper, with few exceptions, differ from the advertising departments of all reputable magazines, in that the newspaper proprietors take no responsibility for the character of the advertisements. The magazines reject all advertisements that the managers know to be fraudulent. The newspapers do not reject them. Let the reader draw his own conclusions as to the trustworthiness of his daily paper as a business institution and a purveyor of the truth. When we have a generation of Americans who understand the business dishonesty of the newspaper and what it implies about the character of the news and the editorials, the newspapers will be better in all de-

[1] They seem to be international institutions if one is to believe the story of the English lady who, comparing the United States unfavorably with her own country, said to an American: "You have nothing equal to *our Century, Harper's,* and *Scribner's.*" Those magazines publish English editions.

partments. Meanwhile, all our writing about the low quality of our daily press will have little effect.

In the matter of journalistic honesty in the news and editorial departments, let us understand this: With few exceptions, American newspapers are so irresponsible that no unsupported statement appearing in them is to be counted on as the truth or as a fair expression of what the men in the editorial offices believe to be the truth. Of course, much of every daily paper is true, because the proprietors have no motive in most cases for telling anything untrue. In order to give some weight to these opinions I may say that for a number of years I was an exchange editor and read newspapers from all parts of America. Also, for a number of years I acted as private secretary to a distinguished person whose name is often in the newspapers, and whose position is such that no editor can have any motive, except the desire to print a "story," for connecting the name with any untrue idea. From a collection of fifty clippings made from American newspapers in a period of two years I find over thirty that are mainly incorrect and contain ideas invented at the reporter's or the editor's desk; more than ten that are entire fabrications; and five that are not only untrue, but damaging to the peace of mind of the subject and other interested persons. And under all this is not a touch of malice, for toward that person the entire press and public are friendly. Imagine the lies that are told about a person to whom the editors

(or, rather, the owners) are indifferent or unfriendly!

When one considers the energy and enterprise of the newspaper, it is difficult to understand why there is not more literary ability, at least of the humbler kind, in the news columns, the reviews and the editorial comments. One reason is, perhaps, that the magazines take all the best journalistic ability, so far as that ability consists in skill in the use of language; any journalist or writer on special subjects prints his work in the magazines if he can, and the newspapers get what is left. Editorial writing is at such a low pitch that there are only two or three real editorial pages in the daily press of the nation. The reporting is often clever and quite as often without conscience. The machinery for gathering world news is amazingly well organized. Other kinds of ability are abundant in the newspaper office; and it is a natural economic fact that the most debased papers, making the most money, can hire the most talented men—and debauch them; while the more conscientious paper, struggling in competition with its rich and dishonest rivals, cannot afford to pay for the best editors and reporters.

If the rising generation will understand this and grow up with an increasing distrust of the newspaper, the newspaper will reform in obedience to the demand of the public, the silent demand expressed by the greater circulation of good papers and the failure of these that are degrading and degraded.

We called in the opinions of one philosopher, Pro-

fessor James, to support our view of the American magazine. Let us summon another philosopher to corroborate in part our view of the newspapers, to show that the foregoing opinions are not (as some newspapers would probably affirm if they noticed the matter at all), the complaints of a crank who does not understand "practical" newspaper work. Our philosopher will confirm, too, the belief of this Guide that the ethics of the newspaper is of importance to the young reader. The newspaper is ours. We must have it; it renders indispensable service to all departments of our life, business, education, philanthropy, politics. We cannot turn our backs on it; we cannot in lofty scorn reject the newsboy at the door. It is for us to understand the constitution and methods of the daily press and not be duped by its grosser treacheries as our fathers have been. I quote from *The Outlook* a letter from Professor George Herbert Palmer, whose name will be found elsewhere in this book as philosopher and translator of the "Odyssey."

"*To the Editor of 'The Outlook':*

"Sir: May I make use of your columns for a personal explanation and also to set forth certain traits in our press and people which manifest themselves, I believe, in an equal degree in no other country?

"The personal facts are these: On June 16th I delivered a Commencement address at a girls' college in Boston, taking for my subject the common objec-

tions to the higher education of women, objections generally rather felt than formulated by hesitating mothers. Five were mentioned: the danger to health, to manners, to marriage, to religion, and to companionship with parents in the home. These I described from the parents' point of view, and then pointed out the misconceptions on which I believed them to rest. In speaking of manners, I said that a mother often fears that attention to study may make her daughter awkward, keep her unfamiliar with the general world, and leave her unfit for mixed society. To which I replied that in the rare cases where intellectual interests do for a time overshadow the social, we may well bear in mind the relative difficulties of subsequent repair. A girl who has had only social interests before twenty-one does not usually gain intellectual ones afterwards; while the ways of the world are rapidly acquired by any young woman of brains. To illustrate, I told of a strong student of Radcliffe who had lived much withdrawn during her course there, alarming her uncollegiate parents by her slender interest in social functions. At graduation they pressed her to devote a year to balls and dinners and to what they regarded as the occult art of manners. She came to me for counsel, and I advised her to accede to their wishes. 'Flirt hard, M.,' said I, 'and show that a college girl is equal to whatever is required of her.' This was the only allusion to the naughty topic which my speech, an hour in length, contained.

"That evening one of the 'yellowest' of the Boston

papers printed a report of my 'Address on Flirtation,' and the next day a reporter came from the same paper requesting an interview. The interview I refused, saying that I had given no such address and I wished my name kept altogether out of print. The following Sunday, however, the bubble was fully blown, the paper printing a column of pretended interview, generously adorned with headlines and quotation marks, setting forth in gay colors my 'advocacy of flirtation.'

"And now the dirty bubble began to float. Not being a constant reader of this particular paper, I knew nothing of its mischief until a week had gone by. Then remonstrances began to be sent to me from all parts of the country, denouncing my hoary frivolity. From half the states of the Union they came, and in such numbers that few days of the past month have been free from a morning insult. My mail has been crowded with solemn or derisive editorials, with distressed letters, abusive postal cards, and occasionally the leaflet of some society for the prevention of vice, its significant passages marked. During all this hullabaloo I have been silent. The story was already widespread when my attention was first called to it. It struck me then as merely a gigantic piece of summer silliness, arguing emptiness of the editorial mind. I felt, too, how easily a man makes himself ridiculous in attempting to prove that he is not a fit subject for ridicule, and how in the long run character is its own best vindication. I should accordingly prefer to remain silent

still; but the story, like all that touches on questions of sex, has shown a strange persistency. My friends are disquieted. Harvard is defamed. Reports of my depravity have lately been sent to me from English and French papers, and in a recent number of *Life* I appear in a capital cartoon, my utterance being reckoned one of the principal events of the month. Perhaps, then, it is as well to say that no such incident has occurred, and that now, when all of us have had our laugh, the racket had better cease.

"But such persistent pursuit of an unoffending person throws into strong relief four defects in our newspapers, and especially in the attitude of our people toward them. In the first place, the plan of reporting practiced here is a mistaken one, and is adopted, so far as I know, nowhere else on earth. Our papers rarely try to give an ordered outline of an address. They either report verbatim, or more usually the reporter is expected to gather a lot of taking phrases, regardless of connection. While these may occasionally amuse, I believe that readers turn less and less to printed reports of addresses. Serious reporting of public speech is coming to an end. It would be well if it ended altogether, so impossible is it already to learn from the newspapers what a man has been saying.

"Of the indifference to truth in the lower class of our papers, their vulgarity, intrusions into private life, and eagerness at all hazards to print something startling, I say little, because these characteristics are widely known and deplored. It apparently did not

occur to any of my abusers to look up the evidence of my folly. I dare say it was the very unlikelihood of the tale which gave it currency. I was in general known to be a quiet person, with no liking for notoriety, a teacher of one of the gravest subjects in a dignified university. I had just published a largely circulated biography, presenting an exalted ideal of marriage. It struck the press of the country as a diverting thing to reverse all this in a day, to picture me as favoring loose relations of the sexes, and to attribute to me buffoonery from which every decent man recoils.

"Again, our people seem growing incapable of taking a joke—or rather of taking anything else. The line which parts lightness from reality is becoming blurred. My lively remark has served as the subject for portentous sermonizing, while the earnest appeal made later in my address to look upon marriage seriously, as that which gives life its best meaning, has been either passed by in silence or mentioned as giving additional point to my nonsense. The passion for facetiousness is taking the heart out of our people and killing true merriment. The 'funny column' has so long used marriage and its accompaniments as a standing jest that it is becoming difficult to think of it in any other way, and the divorce court appears as merely the natural end of the comedy.

"The part of this affair, however, which should give us gravest concern is the lazy credulity of the public. They know the recklessness of journalism

as clearly as do I, on whom its dirty water has been poured. Yet readers trust, and journal copies journal, as securely as if the authorities were quite above suspicion. Once started by the sensational press, my enormities were taken up with amazing swiftness by the respectable and religious papers, and by many thousands of their readers. It is this easy trust on the part of the public which perpetuates newspaper mendacity. What inducement has a paper to criticise its statements when it knows they will never be criticised by its readers? Nothing in all this curious business has surprised me more than the ease with which the American people can be hoaxed. One would expect decent persons to put two and two together, and not to let a story gain acceptance from them unless it had some relation to the character of him of whom it was told. I please myself with thinking that if a piece of profanity were reported of President Taft I should think no worse of President Taft, but very badly and loudly of that paper. But, perhaps I, too, am an American. Perhaps I, too, might rest satisfied with saying, 'I saw it in print.' Only then I should be unreasonable to complain of bad newspapers.

"G. H. Palmer."

CHAPTER XII

THE STUDY OF LITERATURE

IN our age of free libraries and cheap editions of good books anyone who has time and disposition may become not merely a reader of literature, but a student of literature. The difference is not great, perhaps not important; it seems to be only a matter of attitude and method. The reader opens any book that falls in his way or to which he is led for any reason, tries a page or two of it, and continues or not, at pleasure. The student opens a book which he has deliberately sought and brings to it not only the tastes and moods of the ordinary reader, but a determination to know the book, however much or little it may please him. He is impelled not only to know the book, with his critical faculties more or less consciously awake, but to know the circumstances under which the book was written, and its relation to other books. One may read "Hamlet" ten times and know much of it by heart and still not be a *student* of "Hamlet," much less a student of Shakespeare. The student feels it necessary to know the other plays of Shakespeare, some of the other Elizabethan dramatists, a little of the history and biography of Shakespeare's time, and something, too, of

the best critical literature that "Hamlet" has inspired in the past two centuries. The study of literature implies order and method in the selection of books, and orderly reading in turn implies enough seriousness and willful application to turn the act of reading, in part, from play to work.

Well, then, it is better to be a student of literature than a mere reader. Ideally that is true; if there were years enough in a human life we should like to be students of everything under the sun. But the conditions of life limit the mere reader on one side and the student on the other, and it is a question which one is ultimately richer in mind. A mere reader will read "Hamlet" until he can almost imagine himself standing on the stage able to speak the lines of any part. The student of literature will read "Hamlet" thoroughly, investigate its real or supposed relation to the rest of the Shakespearian plays, toil through a large volume of learned notes and opinions, read fifty other Elizabethan tragedies and a half dozen volumes on the life and works of Shakespeare. He is on the way to becoming a student of Shakespeare. But while he is struggling with the learned notes, the mere reader is reading, say, Henley's poems; while the student is reading the lesser plays of Shakespeare, the mere reader is enjoying Browning's tragedies; while the student of "Hamlet" is making the acquaintance of fifty tragedies by Chapman, Beaumont and Fletcher, Jonson, Marlowe, Webster—less than ten of which are masterpieces—the idle reader is wandering through

Sterne's "Tristram Shandy," ten modern novels, the seventh book of "Paradise Lost" (that noble Chant of Creation), a beautiful new edition of the poems of George Herbert, and some quite unrelated bits of prose and verse that happen to attract his eye. Which of the two has pursued the happier, wiser course? Each has spent his time well, and each, if there were more time, might profitably follow the other's course in addition to his own. Intensive, orderly reading, like that of the *student*, tends to make the mind methodical and certainly furnishes it with a coherent body of related ideas on which to meditate. Extensive reading, such as we assume the *reader's* will be, seems to engender superficiality, and yet such is the nature of books and human thought that scattered reading may disclose unexpected and vital relations of idea. Greater effort of will is required to keep the student on his narrower course, and effort of will is profitable to the spirit. On the other hand, the mind is likely to have keener appetite for what it meets on a discursive course, and it assimilates and absorbs more exhaustively what it approaches with natural, unforced interest. "It is better," says Johnson, "when a man reads from immediate inclination."

It would be educational anarchy to depreciate orderly intensive study of any subject, and we shall presently consider some helpful introductions to the methodical study of literature. But I believe that human nature and human conditions favor the unmethodical reader, and that he, on the whole, discov-

ers the best uses of books in the world as it is. For in the world as it is, we have in adult life thirty, forty, fifty years in which to read books. If we consider everything a book from the little volume which occupies half an hour to the Bible which cannot be read through once intelligently in under six months, we see that three books a week is a liberal number for an assiduous reader. So that in a lifetime one cannot expect to know more than five or six thousand books. Five thousand, or two thousand, or one thousand are plenty for a life of wisdom and enjoyment. The five thousand or the one thousand books of the discursive reader are likely to be at least as good a collection as the five thousand or the one thousand of the student of literature. Reader and student are both restricted to a small picking from the vineyard of books. The ordinary reader will have spent a third of his reading hours on books that have meant little to him. The student will have spent a third of his time in digging through sapless, fiberless volumes. But the free wandering reader is not disturbed by the number of books he has read in vain or by the vast number of interesting books he has not read at all; whereas the student of literature is lured by his ideal of exhaustive knowledge to hurry through books that he "ought to know," and in desperation is tempted to insincere pretensions.

In no class of readers does the tendency to unwarranted assumptions of knowledge show more comically than in those advanced students of books

who are called Professors of English Literature. Properly speaking, no one is a professor of literature except the man who can produce something worth reading. But as the term is used it defines a class of teachers who have spent much time and study, not as writers but as readers of books, and who then set themselves up, or are set up in spite of individual modesty by the artificial university systems, to "teach" literature. The professional teacher of literature can know only a limited number of books. And while he has been reading his kind, his unprofessional neighbors, even his students, are reading their kind. He knows some literature that they do not; they know some literature that he does not. The chances are that the professor and not the lay reader will have departed the farther from the true uses of literature. It is possible to read a number of good books while the professor is studying what another professor says in reply to a third professor's opinions about what Shakespeare meant in a certain passage. The professor of literature seems to regard Shakespeare and other poets as inspired children who need a grown person to interpret their baby talk; whereas the lay reader takes it for granted that Shakespeare had more or less definite ideas about what he wished to say and succeeded in saying it with admirable clarity.

To be sure, a professor here and there may be found who is a live and virile reader of poetry like the rest of us, and the faults of pedantry and pretentious authority are not inevitable faults of the

profession as a whole. There is, however, one universal fault of the professional teacher of literature which is imposed by the conditions of employment in our universities and is subversive of the true purpose of colleges and the true purposes of literature. One fundamental idea of a college is to afford a certain number of scholarly men the means of livelihood from college endowments in order that they may have time to devote to books. The modern professor of literature seems to have so many duties of administration and discipline that he has little time to read for the sake of reading—which is the chief reason for reading at all. The old idea of a university as a place where the few educated members of society could retire for study and intellectual communion has passed away, and the professor of literature is rather at a disadvantage in the modern world where there are more educated persons outside the universities than in them, and where the cultivated person of leisure, reading literature by himself, can easily outstrip the professor.

Professor of literature? As well might there be a professor of Life, or a professor of Love, or a professor of Wisdom. Literature is too vast for anyone to profess it, excepting always him who can contribute to it. Even if our professors of literature were a more capable class of men, they would still be anomalous members of society, for they are trying to do an anomalous thing, maintain themselves in authority on a subject which is open to everybody in a world of books and libraries. And they are work-

ing under conditions not only not helpful, but distinctly unfavorable to a true knowledge and enjoyment of literature, as compared with the conditions of the person of equal intelligence outside the college.

My purpose is not so much to dispraise the literary departments of universities as to praise a world which has grown so rich in opportunities that the universities are no longer the unique leaders in literature or the seats of the best knowledge about it. Our masters are on the shelves and not in the colleges. (Carlyle, Emerson, and Ruskin all said that, and it was said before them.) Without going to college we can become students of literature, professors of literature, if we have the talent and the will. I do not say or mean that we should not go to college if we can. I mean that we can stay away from college if we must and still be as wise and happy readers of books as those bachelors of arts who have sat for four years or more under "professors of literature." If my advice were sought on this point, I should advise every boy and girl to go to college if possible, but to take few courses in English literature and English composition. One great advantage of a college course is that it offers four years of comparative leisure, of freedom from the day's work of the breadwinner; and in those four years the student, with a good library at hand, can read for himself. I should advise the student to take courses in foreign languages, history, economics, and the sciences, things which can be taught in classrooms and laboratories and are usually taught by experts.

There is no need of listening to a professor of English who discourses about Walter Scott and Shakespeare; we can read them without assistance. Literature is a universal possession among people of general intelligence. It is made, fostered, and enjoyed by men who are not professors of literature in the meaningless sense; it is written for and addressed to people who are not professors of literature; and it is understood and appreciated, I dare affirm, by no intelligent, cultivated class in the world less certainly, less directly, less profitably than by professors of literature in the modern American college.

Well, we may leave our little declaration of independence from those who are supposed to be authorities in literature, and turning from them not too disrespectfully, go our own way. Let us be readers of literature. The study of literature will take care of itself. We cannot expect to know as much about the sources of "Hamlet" as Professor Puppendorf thinks he knows. Neither can we hope to bring as much imagination to our reading as Lamb brought to his. But of the two masters we shall follow Lamb, who was not a professor, nor even, it seems, a student of literature, but only a reader. If we happen to be interested in Professor Smith's ideas of Milton, we can in three or four hours read his handbook on the subject, or, better, the other handbook from which he got his ideas. For the professors do not keep their wisdom for their students in class; they live, in spite of themselves, in a modern world and publish for the general reader all the knowledge they have—and a

little more. We can follow the professors, if we choose, in the libraries. But probably there will be more wisdom and happiness in following Lamb or Stevenson, or some other reader who was not a professor; they tread a broader highway and never forget what books are made for. We may well follow Dr. S. M. Crothers, "The Gentle Reader," who seems to have been enjoying books all his life and still enjoys them, though he lives near a great university. Another genial guide and counselor, whose company the younger generation might well seek often, is Mr. Howells. He is a professor of literature in the real sense, because he makes it. He is also a reader whose enthusiasms are fresh and individual. Many of his recorded impressions of contemporaneous books are buried in an obscure magazine, and his reticence has its disadvantages in an age when too many inept voices chatter about books. But he reads books and writes about them because he likes them, and so his accounts of his reading are rich in suggestion.

Most of the authentic professors of literature, that is, the men who have produced literature, have been readers rather than students of books. Keats, I am quite sure, had neither opportunity nor inclination to make a formal study of books, even of the old poets from whom his genius drew its sustenance. He seems not to have studied Homer or the English translation by the Elizabethan poet, George Chapman. He calls his sonnet "On First Looking Into Chapman's Homer." You see, he only read it, only "looked into" it, just like an ordinary reader. But

he was not ordinary, he was a poet, and so he could write this of his experience as a reader:

> Much have I travel'd in the realms of gold,
> And many goodly states and kingdoms seen;
> Round many western islands have I been,
> Which bards in fealty to Apollo hold.
> Oft of one wide expanse had I been told,
> That deep-browed Homer ruled as his demesne;
> Yet never did I breathe its pure serene
> Till I heard Chapman speak out loud and bold:
>
> Then felt I like some watcher of the skies
> When a new planet swims into his ken;
> Or like stout Cortez when with eagle eyes
> He stared at the Pacific—and all his men
> Looked at each other with a wild surmise—
> Silent, upon a peak in Darien.

Something like that experience ambushes the road of any reader, the most commonplace of us. We, too, can travel in the realms of gold. Only three or four men are born in a century who could express the experience so finely as that. But the breathless adventure can be ours, even if we cannot write about it.

The great writers themselves are the best guides to one another, for they have kept the reader's point of view—they had too much imagination, as a rule, to descend to any other point of view. We conjecture that Shakespeare was an omnivorous reader. And so, certainly, were Milton, Browning, Tennyson, Shelley, Carlyle, George Eliot, Macaulay. Nearly all the great writers have been, of course, lifelong,

assiduous students of the technical characteristics of certain kinds of literature from which they were learning their art. The poet must study the poets; the novelist must study the novelists. But the creative artist is usually far from being a scientific or methodical student of literature as it is laid out (suggestive words!), in handbooks and courses. The nature of literature and the experience of the makers of it seem to confirm us in the belief that books are to be read, to be understood and enjoyed as they come to one's hands, and not jammed into text-book diagrams of periods and cycles and schools. The great writers of our race, those obviously who know most about literature, seem to have taken their books as they took life, just as they happened to come. They were wanderers, not tourists. And though we shall never see as much by the way as they did and have not the power to travel so far, we can roam through "many goodly states and kingdoms" and be sure of inspiring encounters, if only a small corner of our nature is capable of being inspired.

But as travelers in lands of beauty and adventure may profitably spend an hour a day in searching the guide books for facts about what they have seen and directions for finding the most interesting places, so the reader, without sacrificing his spirit of freedom, may well equip himself with a few handbooks of literature. Suppose that Keats has interested us in Chapman's Homer. Let us find out who Chapman was and when he lived. A fairly reliable book in which to seek for him is Professor George Saints-

bury's "History of Elizabethan Literature." It is one of a series of histories in which the volume on "Early English Literature" is by Mr. Stopford Brooke, and the volume on "English Literature of the Eighteenth Century" is by Mr. Edmund Gosse. We find in Saintsbury's handbook ten pages of biography and criticism of Chapman and extracts from his poetry. This is enough to give a little notion of Chapman's place in literature and to suggest to the ordinary reader whether Chapman is a writer he will wish to know more fully. We find among Mr. Saintsbury's comments on Chapman the following:

"The splendid sonnet of Keats testifies to the influence which his work long had on those Englishmen who were unable to read Homer in the original. A fine essay of Mr. Swinburne's has done, for the first time, justice to his general literary powers, and a very ingenious and, among such hazardous things, unusually probable conjecture of Mr. Minto's identifies him with the 'rival poet' of Shakespeare's sonnets. But these are adventitious claims to fame. What is not subject to such deduction is the assertion that Chapman was a great Englishman who, while exemplifying the traditional claim of great Englishmen to originality, independence, and versatility of work, escaped at once the English tendency to lack of scholarship, and to ignorance of contemporary continental achievements, was entirely free from the fatal Philistinism in taste and in politics, and in other matters, which has been the curse of our race, was a Royalist, a lover, a scholar, and has left us

at once one of the most voluminous and peculiar collections of work that stand to the credit of any literary man of his country."

Here, in this paragraph, we stand neck-deep in the study of literature, its exhilarating eddies of opinion, its mind-strengthening difficulties, and also, we must confess, its harmless dangers and absurdities. Let us run over Mr. Saintsbury's sentences again and see whither they take us.

Keats's sonnet—we have just read that—which Mr. Saintsbury says, testifies to the influence of Chapman for a long time on Englishmen who could not read Greek, really does nothing of the sort. It testifies only that Keats met Chapman, and the momentous meeting took place, in point of fact, at a time when the interest in Elizabethan poetry was reviving after a century that preferred Pope's "Iliad" to Chapman's. Handbook makers sometimes go to sleep and make statements like that, and it is just as well that they do, for their noddings tumble them from their Olympian elevations to our level and help to make them intelligible to the common run of mortals. The mention of Swinburne's essay is an interesting clue to follow. His recent death (1909) has occasioned much talk about him, and at least his name is familiar, and the fact that he was a great poet. It is interesting to discover that he was also a critic of Elizabethan poetry. We are thus led to an important modern critic and poet as a result of having struck from a side path into a history of Elizabethan literature. Mr. Minto's con-

jecture that Chapman was the "rival poet" of Shakespeare's sonnets is valuable because it will take us to those sonnets, and will give us our first taste of the great hodgepodge of conjectures and ingenious guesses which constitute a large part of the "study of literature" and are so delightful and stimulating to lose oneself in. After you have read Shakespeare's sonnets and a biography of Shakespeare and the whole of Mr. Saintsbury's book, you can pick out some other Elizabethan poet and conjecture that *he* is the rival to whom Shakespeare enigmatically alludes. Neither you nor anyone else will ever be sure who has guessed right. But that matters little. The value of the game, whatever its foolish aspects, is that interest in a problem of literature or literary biography cultivates your mind, keeps you reading, so entangles you in books and the things relating to books that, like Mr. Kipling's hero, you can't drop it if you tried. The rewards of such an interest are lifelong and satisfying, even if the solution is unattainable or not really worth attaining. The literary problem is a changeful wind that keeps one forever sailing the sea of books.

The rest of Mr. Saintsbury's remarks, those about English character, have this significance for us: One cannot read books, or study literary problems, without studying the people who produced them. The study of literature is the study of national characteristics. The reason we Americans know so much more about the English than the English know about us, is that we have been brought up on English literature, while

the Englishman has only begun to read our literature. Mr. Saintsbury's reflections on the Philistinism of the English open at once to the reader large questions, philosophic in their nature, but not too philosophic for any ordinary person to think about, the question of the relation of English literature to Continental literature, and the question whether the English, who have produced the greatest of all modern poetry, are in comparison with their neighbors a notably poetic race. One of the best works on English literature for the student to read and possess, that by the Frenchman Taine (the English translation is excellent), is based on a philosophic inquiry into the nature of the English people. There is, so far as I know, no analogous study of American literature, though Professor Barrett Wendell's "Literary History of America" might have developed into such a book if the author had taken pains to think out some of his clever, fugitive suggestions. The best books on the literature of our country which I have seen are Professor Charles F. Richardson's "American Literature" and the "Manual," edited by Mr. Theodore Stanton for the German Tauchnitz edition of British and American authors, and published in this country by the Putnams.

Well, we have entered the classroom in which Mr. Saintsbury is discoursing of Elizabethan literature, we have entered, so to speak, by the side door. If our nature is at all shaped to receive profit and enjoyment from the study of books, we shall be curi-

ous to see from reading the whole of Mr. Saintsbury's book what has led up to Chapman and what writers succeed him. Of the various ways in which authors may be grouped for analysis the historical is the best for the young student; and it is on the historical scheme of division that most studies of literature are based. A very useful series of books has been begun under the editorship of Professor William A. Neilson in which each volume deals with a class of literature, one with the essay, one with the drama, one with ballads, and so on. This series, intended for advanced students, will probably not be the best for the beginner, though it is often true that works intended for advanced readers are the very best for the young, and that books for young readers entirely fail as introductions to more thorough studies. The reader who is really interested in tracing out the relations between writers will in good time wish to read studies of literature made on the historic plan and also some which survey generic divisions of literature. The two methods intersect at right angles. The main thoroughfare of literary study which runs from the early story-tellers through Fielding and Thackeray to Hardy and George Meredith, crosses the other great thoroughfares: the one which follows the relations between Fielding, Gray, Johnson, and Burke and other great men of that age; the one which makes its way through the age of Wordsworth and passes from Burns's cottage to Scott's Abbottsford; and the one through the age of Victoria. This has been surveyed

as far as George Meredith, and the critics are busily putting up the fences and the sign posts.

In view of the limitations which mere time imposes on the number of books which any individual may study, we shall resolve early not to attempt the impossible, not to try to study with great intimacy the entire range of literature. The thing to do is to select, or to allow our natural drift of mind to select for us, one period of literature, or one group, or one writer in a period. In ten years of leisurely but thoughtful reading, after the day's work is done, one can know, so far as one's given capacity will admit, as much about Shakespeare as any Shakespeare scholar, that is, as much that is essential and worth knowing. Not that ten years will exhaust Shakespeare or any other great poet, but they will suffice for the laying of a foundation of knowledge complete and adequate for the individual reader, and on that foundation the individual can build his personal knowledge of the poet, a structure in which the materials furnished by other students become of decreasing importance.

There is a story of a French scholar who made up his mind to write a great book on Shakespeare. In preparation he resolved to read all that had been written about the poet. He found that the accumulation of books on Shakespeare in the Paris libraries was a quarry which he could not excavate in a lifetime, and more appalling still, contemporary scholars and critics were producing books faster than he could read them. This story should console and in-

struct us. We cannot read all that has been written about Shakespeare; neither can the professional Shakespearians. But we can all read enough. Two or three books a year for ten years will, I am sure, put any student in possession of the best thought of the world on Shakespeare or any other writer. The multitude of works are repetitious, one volume repeats the best of a hundred others, and most of them are waste matter, even for the specialist who vainly strives to digest them.

The thing for us to learn early is not to be appalled by the miles of shelves full of books, but to regard them in a cheerful spirit, to look at them as an interminable supply of spiritual food and drink, a comforting abundance that shall not tempt us to be gourmands. I am convinced that young people are often deterred from the study of books by professional students who preside over the long shelves in the twilight of libraries—blinking high priests of literature who seem to say: "Ah! young seeker of knowledge, here is the mystery of mysteries, where only a few of us after long and blinding study are qualified to dwell. For five and forty years I have been studying Shakespeare—whisper the name in reverence, not for him, but for me—and I have found that in the 'Winter's Tale' a certain comma has been misplaced by preceding high priests, and the line should read thus and so." Well, if you go inside and open a few windows to let the light and air in, you are likely to find, sitting in one of the airiest recesses, an acquaintance of yours, quite an ordinary person, who

has read the "Winter's Tale" for only five years, has not bothered his head about that blessed comma, can tell you things about the play that the high priest would not find out in a million years, and is using the high priest's latest disquisition for a paper weight.

So approach your Shakespeare, if he be the poet you select for special study in the next ten years, in a light-hearted and confident spirit. He *is* a mystery, but he is not past finding out, and the elements of mystery that baffle, that deserve respect, are those which he chose to wrap about himself and his work. The mysteries which others have hung about him are moth-eaten hangings or modern slazy draperies that tear at a vigorous touch. If you hear learned literary muttering behind the arras and plunge your sword through, you will kill, not the king, but a commentator Polonius.

Anyone in the leisure of his evenings, or of his days, if he is fortunate enough to have unoccupied sunlit hours, may master any poet in the language to which we have been born. Nothing is necessary to this study but a literate, intelligent mind, the text of the poet and such books as one can get in the libraries or with one's pin money. And in selecting the books one has only to begin at random and follow the lead of the books themselves. Any text of "Macbeth" will give references to all the critical works that anyone needs and they in turn will point to all the rest. You do not need a laboratory course in philology in order to read your poet

and to know him, to know him at least as well as the philologist knows him, to know him better, if you have a spark of poetic imagination. There is no democracy so natural, so real, and so increasingly populous as the democracy of studious readers. We acknowledge divinity in man, in our poet above all, and we see flickerings of divinity in the rare reader who is a critic. But we do not acknowledge the divine right of Shakespearian scholars or of any other self-constituted authorities in books. In our literary state the scholars are not our masters but our servants. We rejoice that they are at work and now and again turn up for us a useful piece of knowledge. But they cannot monopolize knowledge of the poets. That is open to any of us, and it is attainable with far less labor than the scholars have led us to believe.

The selection of a single writer for special study, a selection open to us all, should not be made in haste. It should be a "natural selection" determined gradually and unawares. It will not do to say: "I will now begin to study Shakespeare for ten years." That New Year's resolution will not survive the first of February. But as you browse among books you may find yourself especially drawn to some one of the poets or prose writers. Follow your master when you find him.

In the meantime you can get a general idea of the development of English literature and the place of the chief writers. A good method is to read selections from English prose and poetry grouped

in historical sequence. The volumes of prose edited by Henry Craik and Ward's "English Poets" afford an adequate survey of British literature. Carpenter's "American Prose" and Stedman's "American Anthology" constitute an excellent introduction to the branch of English literature produced on this side of the water. The volumes of selections may be accompanied by the historical handbooks already mentioned, which deal with literary periods, or by one of the histories which cover all the centuries of English authors, such as Saintsbury's "Short History," or Stopford Brooke's "English Literature." The student should guard against spending too large a portion of his time reading about literature instead of reading the literature itself. But a systematic review of the history of a national literature has great value, apart from the enjoyment of literature; it is, if nothing more, a course in history and biography. I have found that the study of a handbook of a foreign literature in which I could not hope to read extensively was in effect a study of the development of the foreign nation. I never read a better history of Rome than J. W. Mackail's "Latin Literature." The student who can read French will receive pleasure and profit from Petit de Julleville's "Littérature Française" or from the shorter "Petit Histoire" of M. Delphine Duval.

Everyone will study literature in his own way, keep the attitude which his own nature determines, and for that matter the nature of the individual will determine whether he shall study literature at all.

I would make one last suggestion to the eager student: Let your study be diligent and as serious as may be, but do not let it be solemn. I once attended a lecture on literature given to a mixed audience, that is, an audience composed mainly of ladies. The lecture was not bad in its way; it contained a good deal of useful information, but at times it reminded me of the discourses on "terewth" by Mr. Chadband in "Bleak House." It was the audience that was oppressive. The ladies were not, so far as I could see, entertained, but they had paid their money for a dose of light, literature and culture and they meant to have it. So they sat with looks of solemn determination devotedly taking in every word. Two ladies near me were not solemn; they concealed their restiveness and maintained a respectful but not quite attentive demeanor. As I followed them out, I heard one of them say, "Would not Falstaff have roared to hear himself talked about that way"? I once heard a class rebuked for laughing aloud at something funny in Chaucer. The classroom was a serious place and the professor was working. But Chaucer did not intend to be serious at that moment. On another occasion the professor remarked that it was well that Chaucer had not subjected his genius to the deadening effect of the universities of his time, and it occurred to me then that he would have fared about as well in a medieval university as his poems were faring in a modern one. Of course we take literature seriously; by a kind of paradox we take humorous literature seriously. But solemnity is seldom in

place when one is reading or studying books. The hours of hard work and deliberate application which are necessary to a study of literature should be joyous hours, and the only appropriate solemnity is that directly inspired by the poets and prose writers when they are solemn.

LIST OF WORKS ON LITERATURE

Supplementary to Chapter XII

Below are given the titles of a few books helpful to the student of literature and literary history.

Hiram Corson. *Aims of Literary Study.*

Frederic Harrison. *Choice of Books and Other Literary Pieces.*

George Edward B. Saintsbury. *A Short History of English Literature.*

Stopford Augustus Brooke. *English Literature.*

William Minto. *Manual of English Prose Literature.*

William Vaughn Moody and Robert Morss Lovett. *History of English Literature.*

Remarkable among books for schools on account of its excellent literary style.

Hippolyte Adolphe Taine. *History of English Literature.*

Philosophical criticism for advanced readers.

Stopford Augustus Brooke. *Early English Literature.*

George Edward B. Saintsbury. *Elizabethan Literature.*

John Addington Symonds. *Shakespeare's Predecessors in the English Drama.*

George G. Greenwood. *The Shakespeare Problem Restated.*

This work gives a trustworthy appraisal of many modern works on Shakespeare. (See page 166 of this Guide.)

John Churton Collins. *Studies in Shakespeare.*

Edmund William Gosse. *Jacobean Poets. From Shakespeare to Pope. A History of Eighteenth Century Literature.*

Francis B. Gummere. *Handbook of Poetics.*

Thomas Seccombe. *The Age of Johnson.*

Walter Bagehot. *Literary Studies.*

Charles Francis Richardson. *American Literature.*

In one volume, in the popular edition.

Theodore Stanton (and others). *Manual of American Literature.*

Edward Dowden. *History of French Literature.*

Ferdinand Brunetière. *Manual of the History of French Literature.*

In the English translation.

Delphine Duval. *Petite Histoire de la Littérature Française.*

In Heath's *Modern Language Series.*

Petit de Julleville. *Littérature Française.*

Both the foregoing works are in easy French.

René Doumic. *Contemporary French Novelists.*

In the English translation.

Henry James. *French Poets and Novelists.*

Kuno Francke. *History of German Literature.*

Gilbert Murray. *History of Ancient Greek Literature.*

John Pentland Mahaffy. *History of Classical Greek Literature.*

John William Mackail. *Latin Literature.*

CHAPTER XIII

SCIENCE AND PHILOSOPHY

IF there is one central idea which it is hoped a young reader might find in the foregoing pages, it is this: that literature is for everyone, young or old, who has the capacity to enjoy it, that no special fitness is required but the gift of a little imagination, that no particular training can prepare us for the reading of books except the very act of reading. For literature is addressed to the imagination; that is, a work which touches the imagination becomes Literature as distinguished from all other printed things. By virtue of its imagination it becomes permanent, it remains intelligible to the human being of every race and age, the only conditions of intelligibility being that the reader shall be literate and that the book shall be in the language in which the reader has been brought up or in a foreign tongue which he has learned to read. We have insisted on a kind of liberty, equality, and union in the world of writers and readers, and have, perhaps needlessly, made a declaration of independence against all scholars, philosophers, and theorists who try to put obstacles in our way and arrogate to themselves exclusive rights and privileges, special understandings of the world's lit-

erature. We believe that literature is intended for everybody and that it is addressed to everybody by the creative mind of art. We believe that all readers are equal in the presence of a book or work of art, but we hastily qualify this, as we must qualify the political doctrine of equality. No two men are really equal, no two persons will get the same pleasure and benefit from any book. But the inequalities are natural and not artificial. Of a thousand persons of all ages who read the "Iliad," the hundred who get the most out of it will include men, women, and children, some who have "higher" education and some who have not, well-informed men and uninformed boys. The hundred will be those who have the most imagination. The boy of fourteen who has an active intelligence can understand Shakespeare better than the least imaginative of those who have taken the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English at our universities. The man of imagination, even if he has taken the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, will find deeper delight and wisdom in Shakespeare than the uninformed boy. Readers differ in individual capacities and in the extent of their experience in intellectual matters. But class differences, especially school-made differences, are swept away by the power of literature, which abhors inessential distinctions and goes direct to the human intelligence.

The direct appeal of literature to the human intelligence and human emotions is what we mean by our principle of union. Nothing can divorce us from the poet if we have a spark of poetry in us.

The contact of mind between poet and reader is immediate, and is effected without any go-between, any intercessor or critical negotiator.

Now, what happens to the principles of our declaration of independence and the constitution of our democracy of readers when we open to a page of one of Darwin's works on biology, or a page of the philosopher Plato, and find that we do not get the sense of it at all? We can understand the "Iliad," the "Book of Job," "Macbeth," "Faust"; they mean *something* to us, even if we do not receive their whole import. But here, in two great thinkers who have influenced the whole intellectual world, Plato and Darwin, we come upon pages that to us mean absolutely nothing. The works of Plato and Darwin are certainly literature. But they are something else besides: they are science, and the understanding of them depends on a knowledge of the science that went before the particular pages that are so meaningless to us. Here is a kind of literature, the mere reading of which requires special training.

We may call this the Literature of Information as distinguished from the Literature of Imagination. The distinction is not sharp; a book leans to one side or the other of the line, but it does not fall clear of the line. A work of imagination, a poem, a novel, or an essay, may contain abundant information, may be loaded with facts; on the other hand, the greatest of those who have discovered and expounded facts, Darwin, Gibbon, Huxley, have had literary power and imagination. But most great works of imag-

ination deal with universal experiences, they treat human nature and common humanity's thought and feelings about the world. As Hazlitt says, nature and feeling are the same in all periods. So the common man understands the "Iliad," and the story of Joseph and his brothers, and "The Scarlet Letter" and "Silas Marner."

In Macaulay's "Essay on Milton" is a very misleading piece of philosophizing on the "progress of poesy." It is a pity, when there are so many better essays—Macaulay wrote twenty better ones—that this should be selected for reading in the schools as part of the requirements for college entrance. Macaulay sees that the "Iliad" is as great a poem as the world has known. He also sees that science in his own time is progressing by leaps and bounds, that, in his own vigorous words, "any intelligent man may now, by resolutely applying himself for a few years to mathematics, learn more than the great Newton knew after half a century of study and meditation." He accordingly reasons, or rather makes the long jump, that whereas science progresses, poetry declines with the advance of civilization, and the wonder is that Milton should have written so great a poem in a "civilized" age. Macaulay was young when he wrote the essay; he seldom muddled ideas as badly as that. Poetry, if we view the history of the world in five-century periods, neither advances nor declines. It fluctuates from century to century, but it keeps a general permanent level. Now and again appears a new poet to add to the number of

poems, but poetry does *not* change. Neither does the individual poem. The "Iliad" is precisely what it was two thousand years ago, and two thousand years from now it will be neither diminished nor augmented. Creative art, dealing with universal ideas and feelings and needing only a well-developed language to work in, can produce a masterpiece in any one of forty countries any time the genius is born capable of doing the work. This statement is too simple to exhaust a large subject. The point is that once man has reached a certain point of culture, has come to have a language and a religion and a national tradition, more civilization or less, more science or less, neither helps nor hinders his art. The arrival of a great poet can be counted on every two or three centuries. It is because poetry and other forms of imaginative literature are independent of time and progress that the reader's ability to understand them is independent of time and progress. Our boys can understand the "Iliad." Fetch a Greek boy back from ancient Athens and give us his Greek tongue and we can interest him in Milton's story of Satan in half a day. But it will take a year or two to make him understand an elementary schoolbook about electricity. The great ideas about human nature and human feelings and about the visible world and the gods men dream of and believe in, these are the stuff of Imaginative Literature; they have been expressed over and over again in all ages and are intelligible to a Chinaman or an Englishman of the year one thousand or the

year two thousand. That is why we are all citizens in the democracy of readers. That is why we do not need special knowledge to read "Hamlet," why the most direct preparation for the reading of "Hamlet" is the reading of "Macbeth" and "Lear."

Now, all special subjects, biology, geology, zoölogy, political economy, are continually being forced by the imaginative power of great writers into the realm of Imaginative Literature. Poetry is full of philosophy. Our novels are shot through and through with problems of economics. Great expositors like Huxley and Mill are working over and interpreting the discoveries of science, relating them to our common life and making, not their minute facts but their bearing, clear to the ordinary man. So that there is a great deal of science and philosophy within the reach of the untrained reader. And a wide general reading prepares any person, by giving him a multitude of hints and stray bits of information, to make his way through a technical volume devoted to one special subject. The moral talks of Socrates to Athenian youths lead one on, as Socrates seems to have intended to lead those boys on, into the uttermost fields of philosophy. The genial essayists, Stevenson, Lamb, Emerson, are all tinged with philosophy and science, at least the social and political sciences. And when an idle reader approaches a new subject, economics, chemistry, or philosophy, he often finds with delight that he has been reading about it all his life. He is like the man in Molière's comedy

who was surprised to find that he had always been speaking prose.

Yet there remains a good deal of the Literature of Information which can be understood only after a gradual approach to it through other works. You must learn the elements of chemistry before you can understand the arguments of the modern men of science about radium. You must read some elementary discussions of economics before you can take part in the arguments about protection and free trade, socialism, banking, and currency.

At this point the Guide to Reading parts company with you and leaves you in the hands of the economists, the historians, the chemists, the philosophers. Special teachers and advisers will conduct you into those subjects. They are organized subjects. The paths to them are steep but well graded and paved. If you wander upon these paths without guidance you will not harm yourself, and, if you do not try to discuss what you do not understand, you will not harm anyone else. The list of works in philosophy and science which I append includes some that I, an errant reader, have stumbled into with pleasure and profit. I do not know surely whether any one of them is the best in its subject or whether it is the proper work to read first. I only know in general that a civilized man should for his own pleasure and enlightenment set his wits against a hard technical book once in a while for the sake of the exercise, and that although for purposes of wisdom and happiness the Literature of the Ages contains all that is

necessary, everybody ought to go a little way into some special subject that lies less in the realm of literature than in the realm of science.

LIST OF WORKS IN SCIENCE AND PHILOSOPHY

Supplementary to Chapter XIII

In this list are a few volumes of scientific and philosophic works, notable for their literary excellence, or for their clearness to the general reader, or for the historical and human importance of the author. There is no attempt at order or system except the alphabetical sequence of authors. Some philosophic and scientific works will be found in the list of essays, on page 192.

Grant Allen. *The Story of the Plants.*

In *Appleton's Library of Useful Stories.*

Marcus Aurelius Antoninus. *Thoughts or Meditations.*

In *Everyman's Library* and many cheap editions.

John Lubbock (Lord Avebury). *The Beauties of Nature and the Wonders of the World We Live In. The Use of Life.*

A popular writer on scientific and philosophic subjects.

Liberty Hyde Bailey. *First Lessons with Plants. Garden Making.*

Robert Stawell Ball. *The Earth's Beginning. Star-Land: Being Talks with Young People.*

John Burroughs. *Birds and Bees and Other Studies in Nature. Squirrels and Other Fur Bearers.*

These books are especially suitable for young readers.

Charles Tripler Child. *The How and Why of Electricity.*

For the uninformed reader.

James Dwight Dana. *The Geological Story Briefly Told.*

Charles Robert Darwin. *On the Origin of Species. What Mr. Darwin Saw in His Voyage Round the World in the Ship "Beagle."*

The second of the two books named is especially for young readers. The book from which it is taken, Darwin's "Journal" of the voyage is in *Everyman's Library.* For expositions of Darwin's theories, see Huxley's "Darwiniana," Wallace's "Darwinism" and David Starr Jordan's "Footnotes to Evolution."

Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson. *The Greek View of Life. A Modern Symposium.*

Robert Kennedy Duncan. *The New Knowledge.*

A popular exposition of theories of matter that have developed since the discovery of radioactivity. Intelligible to any (intelligent) high-school pupil.

Epictetus. *Discourses.*

The English translation in *Bohn's Library.*

Francis Galton. *Natural Inheritance. Inquiries into Human Faculty.*

The second volume is in *Everyman's Library.*

Archibald Geikie. *Class-Book of Geology.*

Henry George. *Our Land and Land Policy. The Science of Political Economy.*

Asa Gray. *Manual of the Botany of the Northern United States.*

Arthur Twining Hadley. *The Education of the American Citizen.*

Hermann Ludwig Ferdinand von Helmholtz. *Popular Lectures on Scientific Subjects.*

In the English translation by Edmund Atkinson with Helmholtz's "Autobiography" and an introduction by Tyndall.

Karl Hilty. *Happiness: Essays on the Meaning of Life.*

Translated by Francis Greenwood Peabody.

William Temple Hornaday. *The American Natural History.*

Charles de Forest Hoxie. *How the People Rule; Civics for Boys and Girls.*

Thomas Henry Huxley. *Darwiniana. Evolution and Ethics. Man's Place in Nature.*

Huxley is the greatest man of letters among modern English men of science. A volume of his essays is in *Everyman's Library.*

Ernest Ingersoll. *Book of the Ocean.*

Especially for young people.

Harold Jacoby. *Practical Talks by an Astronomer.*

William James. *The Principles of Psychology. The Will to Believe.*

Herbert Keightly Job. *Among the Water-Fowl.*

David Starr Jordan. *True Tales of Birds and Beasts.*

Especially for young readers.

William Thomson (Lord Kelvin). *Popular Lectures and Addresses.*

Henry Demarest Lloyd. *Wealth Against Commonwealth.*

An important work on modern economic and business problems.

John Stuart Mill. *On Liberty. Principles of Political Economy.*

John Morley. *On Compromise.*

Hugo Münsterberg. *Psychology and Life. On the Witness Stand.*

Frederic William Henry Myers. *Science and a Future Life.*

Simon Newcomb. *Astronomy for Everybody.*

George Herbert Palmer. *The Field of Ethics. The Nature of Goodness.*

Walter Horatio Pater. *Plato and Platonism.*

Friedrich Paulsen. *Introduction to Philosophy.*

The excellent English translation affords within easy compass a view of philosophy equal to several elementary courses in philosophy at a university. It may be begun by any young man or woman of, say, eighteen.

Plato. *Dialogues.*

The "Republic" is in *Everyman's Library* and in other cheap editions. Several of the dialogues are to be found under the title, "Trial and Death of Socrates" in the *Golden Treasury Series.* See also Walter Pater's "Plato and Platonism." The great Plato in English is Jowett's.

Jacob August Riis. *The Battle with the Slum. How the Other Half Lives. The Children of the Poor.*

Among the most sensible, sympathetic and human of modern works on sociology.

Josiah Royce. *The Spirit of Modern Philosophy. Studies of Good and Evil. The World and the Individual.*

"The Spirit of Modern Philosophy" is a beautifully written introduction to the study of philosophy.

George Santayana. *The Sense of Beauty. Poetry and Religion.*

Garrett Putnam Serviss. *Astronomy with an Opera Glass.*

Nathaniel Southgate Shaler. *Aspects of the Earth. The Individual: A Study of Life and Death. Nature and Man in America.*

Dallas Lore Sharp. *A Watcher in the Woods. Wild Life Near Home.*

Henry Sidgwick. *The Elements of Politics. The Methods of Ethics.*

Herbert Spencer. *First Principles. The Principles of Ethics. The Principles of Sociology.*

Silvanus Phillips Thompson. *Elementary Lessons in Electricity and Magnetism.*

Richard Chenevix Trench. *On the Study of Words.*

Contains all the philology that anyone needs.

John Tyndall. *Fragments of Science. New Fragments. Essays on the Imagination in Science. Glaciers of the Alps and Mountaineering in 1861.*

The last volume is in *Everyman's Library,* with an introduction by Lord Avebury.

Alfred Russel Wallace. *Man's Place in the Universe. The Malay Archipelago. Australia and New Zealand.*

Gilbert White. *Natural History and Antiquities of Selborne.*

In *Everyman's Library.*

WILHELM WINDELBAND. *History of Ancient Philosophy.*

WALTER AUGUSTUS WYCKOFF. *The Workers: An Experiment in Reality.*

The story of a professor of economics and sociology who became a laborer. Interesting as a story and a good popular introduction to the problems of labor and wages.

THE END